A SIGN OF AFFECTION

3



suu Morishita

A SIGN OF AFFECTION

3

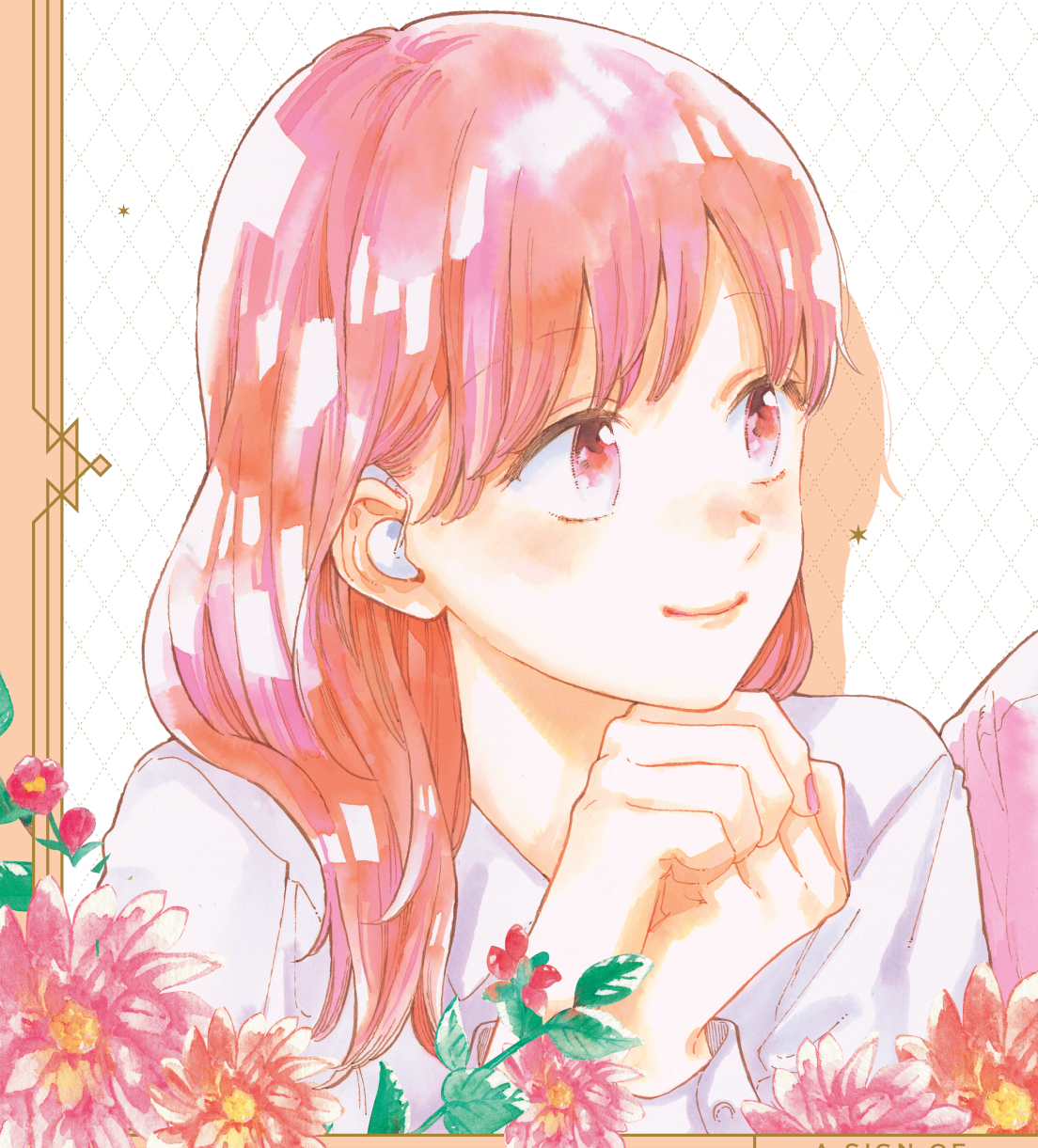
suu Morishita





Sign.9

I Always Thought I Just Wanted to Watch



CONTENTS

Sign.9
I Always Thought I Just Wanted to Watch
2

— ✦ —

Sign.10
February 21st
47

— ✦ —

Sign.11
Far & Near
83

— ✦ —

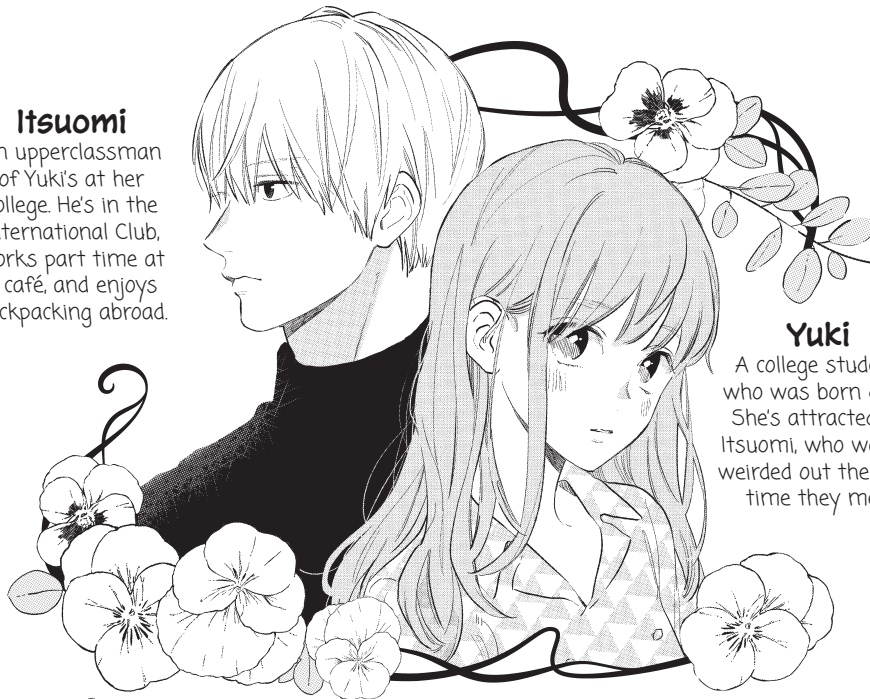
Sign.12
Homecoming
117

— ✦ —

Extras
Translation Notes
156

*When the letters in the bubbles are washed out, it means that Yuki is reading the speaker's lips and discerning words from the context of the conversation. When the letters are shown sideways, it means she's having difficulty figuring out a word.

CHARACTERS



Itsuomi
An upperclassman of Yuki's at her college. He's in the International Club, works part time at a café, and enjoys backpacking abroad.

Yuki
A college student who was born deaf. She's attracted to Itsuomi, who wasn't weirded out the first time they met.



Rin-chan
A friend of Yuki's and a member of the same club as Itsuomi. She's crushing on Kyouya.



Oushi
A childhood friend of Yuki's. He can use sign language and somehow always ends up giving her a hard time.



Kyouya
Itsuomi's cousin and owner of the café where Itsuomi works part time.



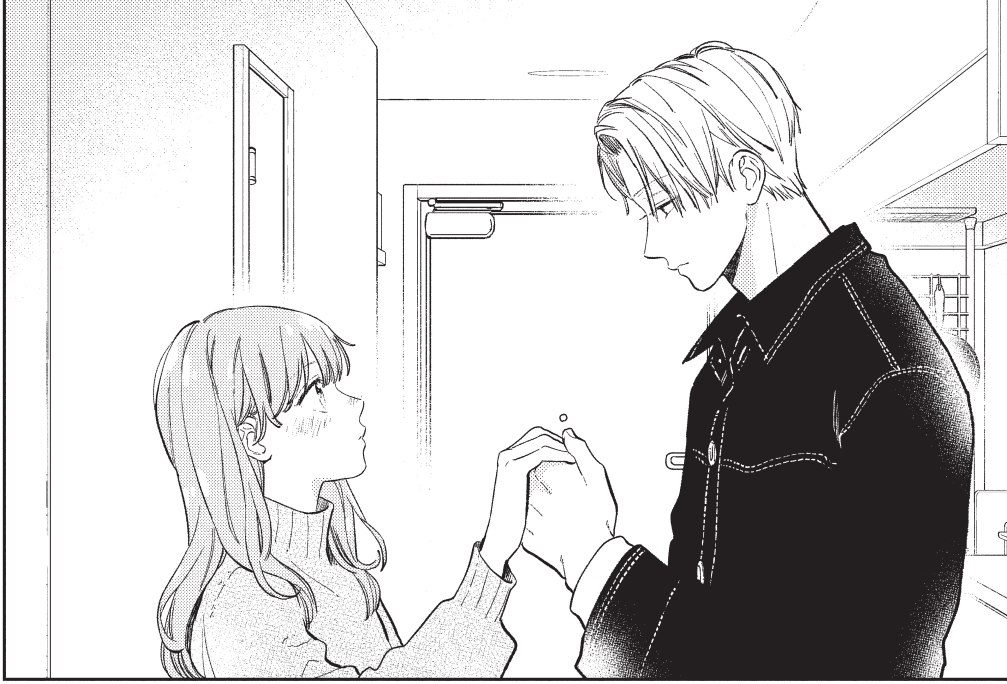
Emma & Shin
Classmates of Itsuomi from high school.

STORY

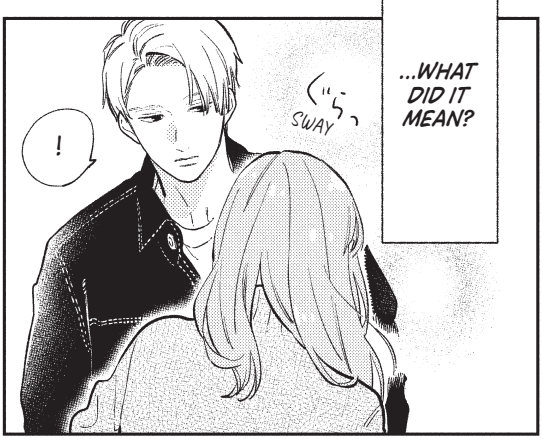
Yuki is a college student who was born deaf. One day, a foreign tourist asks her for directions on the train. Not knowing any English, she panics, until an upperclassman from her school, Itsuomi, comes to her rescue. Itsuomi doesn't treat her like a delicate flower so, every time they meet, Yuki is more and more enchanted by him, eventually realizing that she's in love with him. She decides to go after him seriously and is surprised to find herself invited to his place, where things heat up. On the way home, Yuki starts feeling insecure about Itsuomi's friend Emma, but then Itsuomi runs up and kisses her hand...


A SIGN OF
AFFECTION

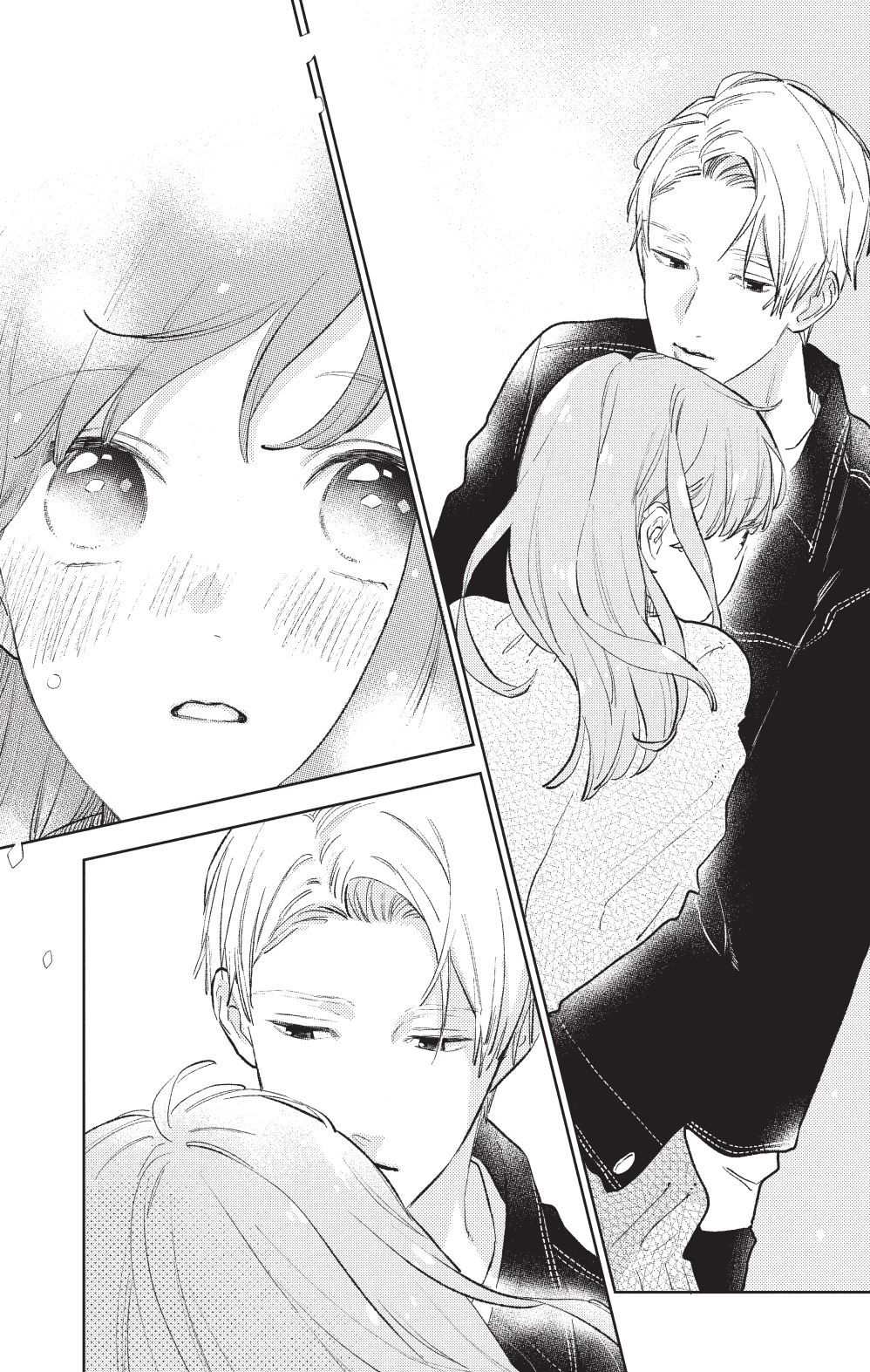


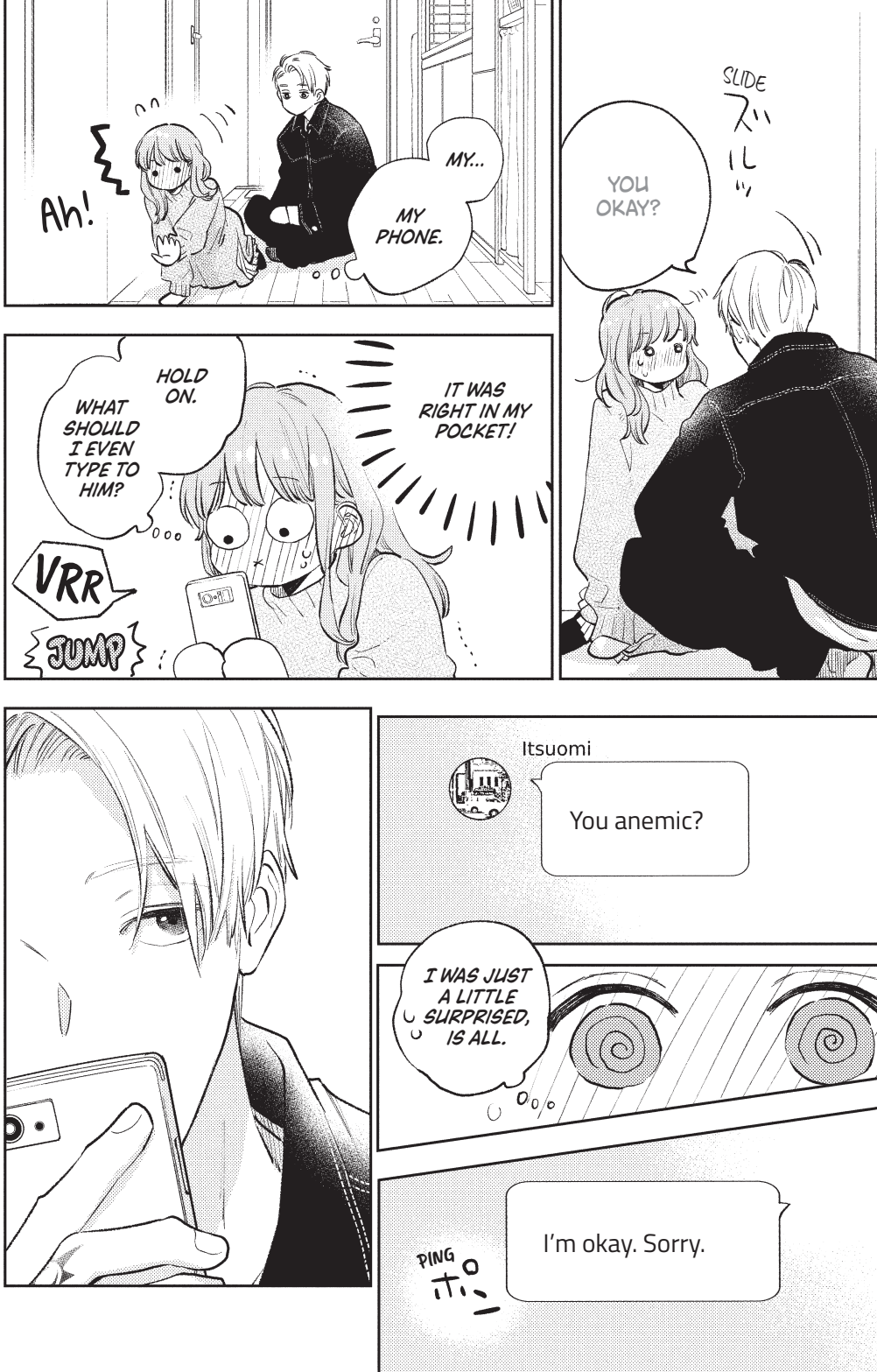


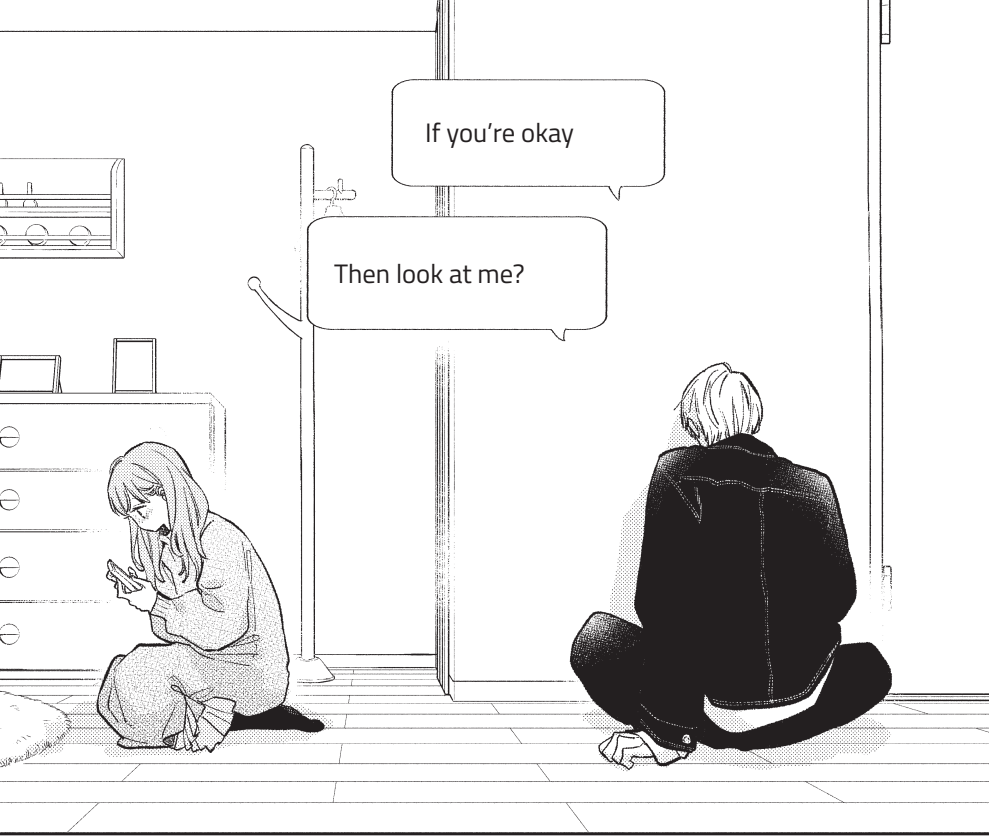

THAT KISS ON THE HAND...

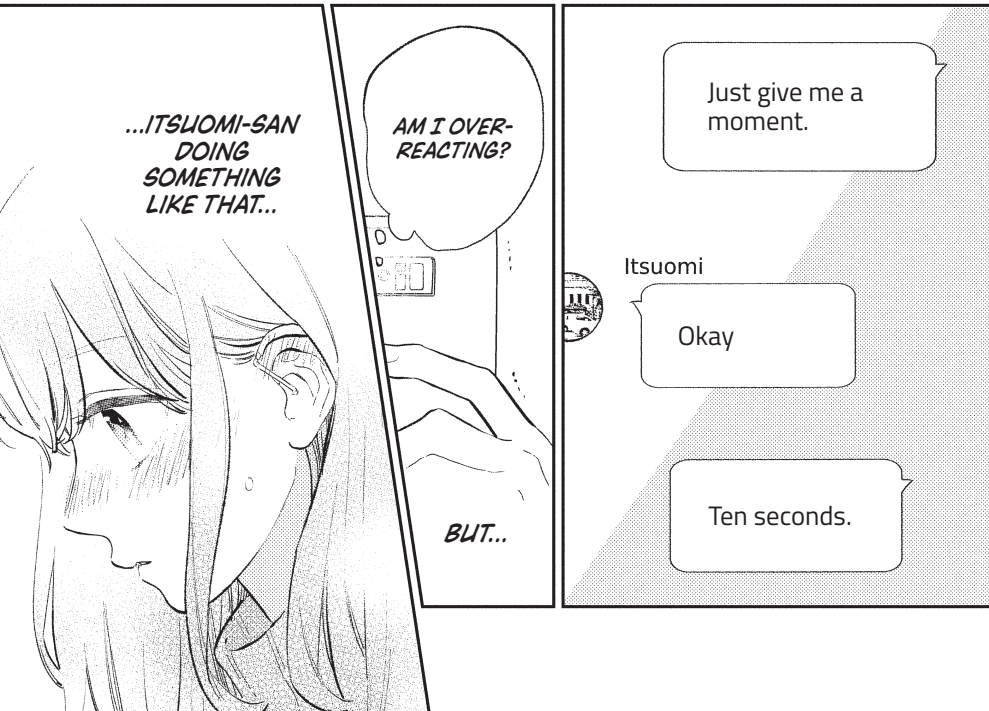

...WHAT DID IT MEAN?
SWAY
!

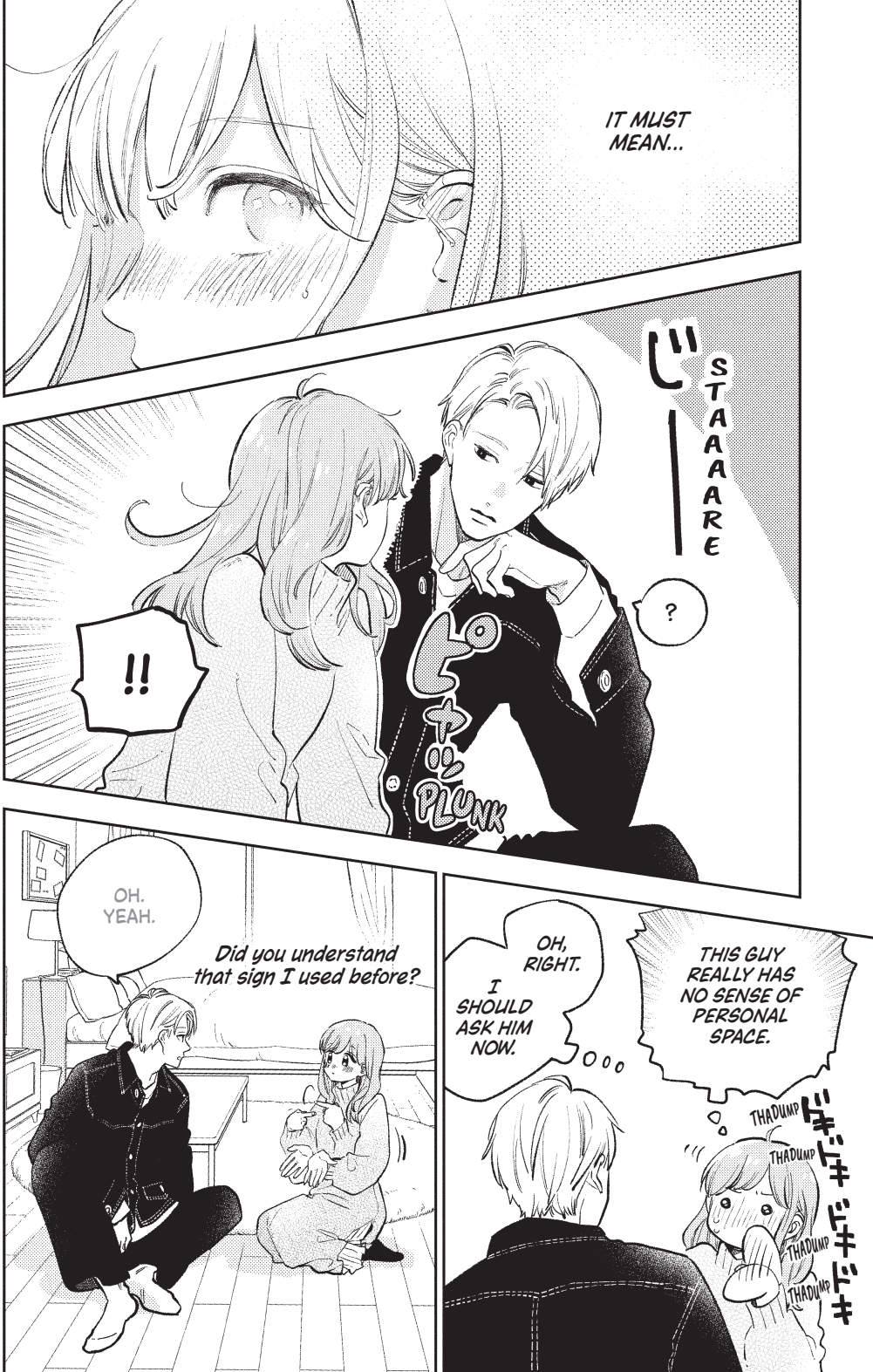

ITSUOMI-SAN...?

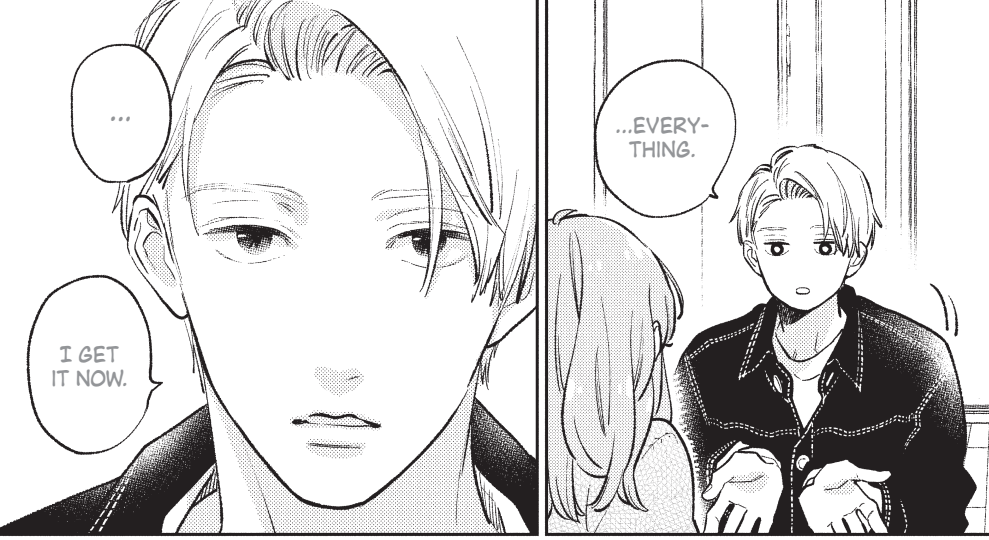


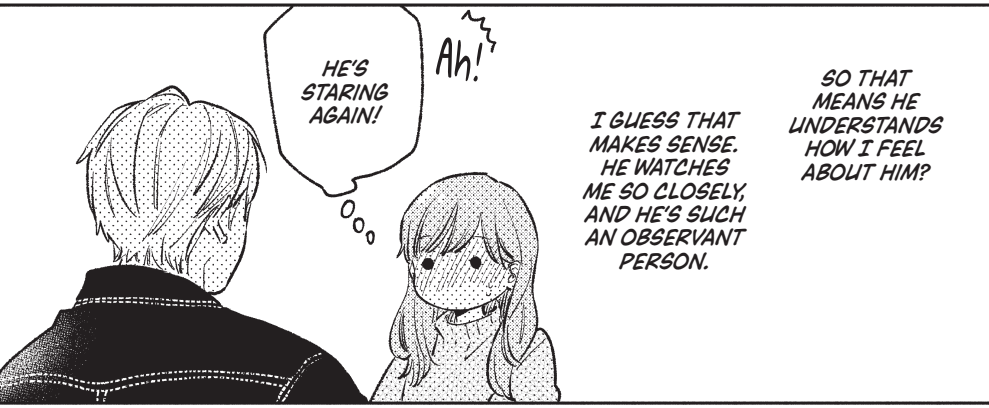

Ah!
MY...
MY PHONE.
SLIDE
YOU OKAY?
HOLD ON.
WHAT SHOULD I EVEN TYPE TO HIM?
IT WAS RIGHT IN MY POCKET!
VRR
JUMP
Itsuomi
You anemic?
I WAS JUST A LITTLE SURPRISED, IS ALL.
I'm okay. Sorry.
PING

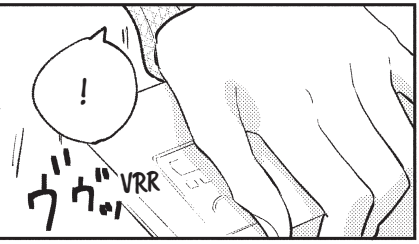

If you're okay
Then look at me?

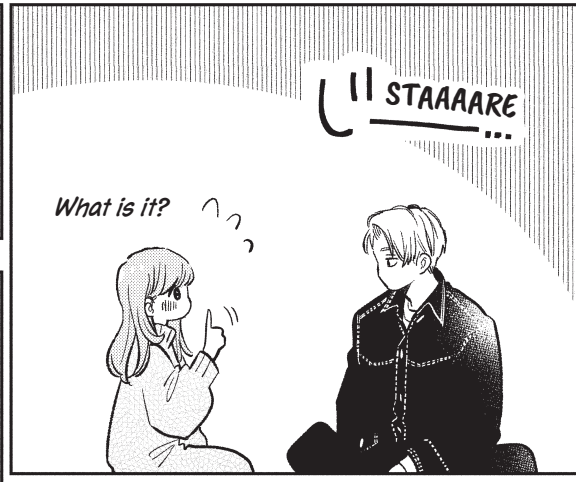

Just give me a moment.
Itsuomi
Okay
Ten seconds.
AM I OVER-REACTING?
BUT...
...ITSUOMI-SAN DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT...


IT MUST MEAN...
じ——STAAARE
?
!!
PLUNK
OH. YEAH.
Did you understand that sign I used before?
THIS GUY REALLY HAS NO SENSE OF PERSONAL SPACE.
OH, RIGHT. I SHOULD ASK HIM NOW.
THADUMP
ドキッドキ ドキドキ


...
I GET IT NOW.
...EVERY-THING.


HE'S STARING AGAIN!
Ah!
I GUESS THAT MAKES SENSE. HE WATCHES ME SO CLOSELY, AND HE'S SUCH AN OBSERVANT PERSON.
SO THAT MEANS HE UNDERSTANDS HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM?


!
ヴヴ VRR


STAAAARE...
What is it?

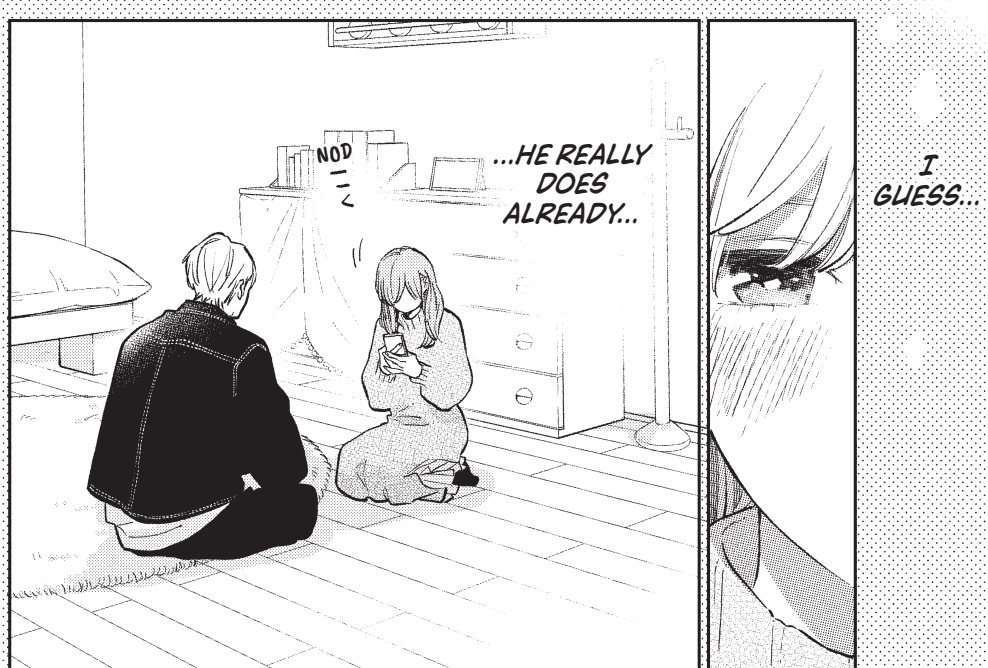

It's about Rin

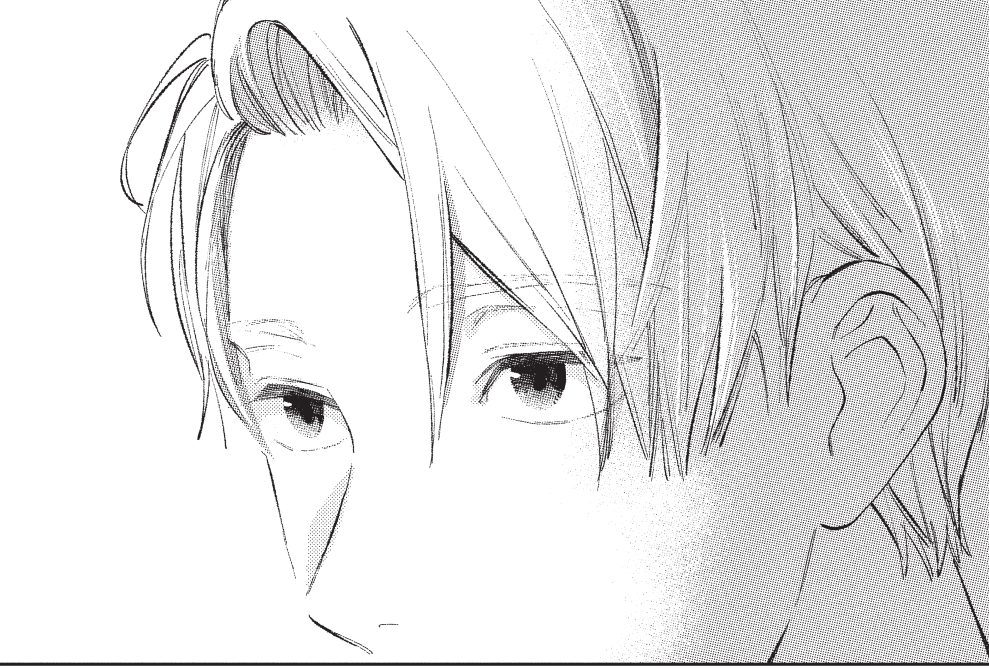
Itsuomi

It's pretty obvious she's been coming to the cafe just to see Kyouya

But Yuki

Have you been coming to see me?






VRR
JUST AS I THOUGHT.
Itsuomi
I had a feeling
Itsuomi
I just thought, maybe, you know

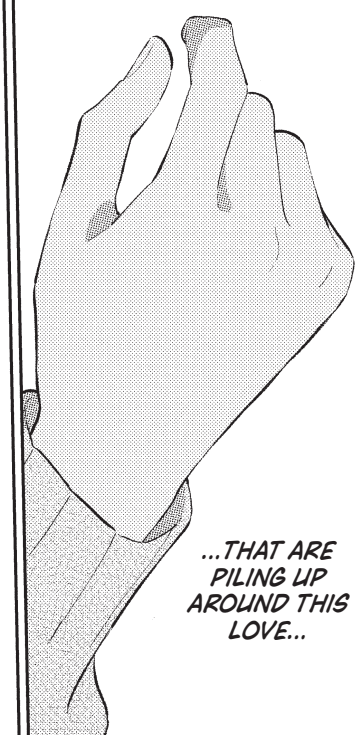
BUT...

...HE CAN'T POSSIBLY KNOW...

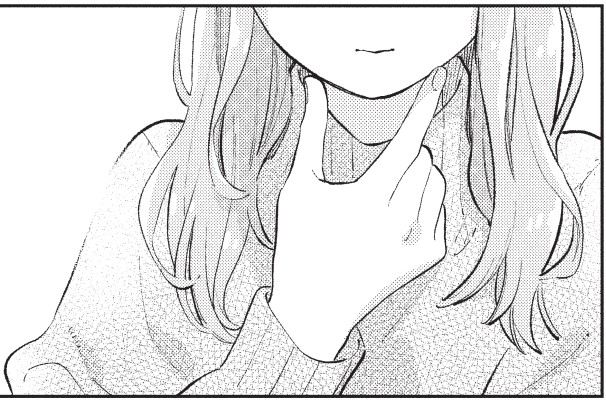


...HOW STRONG THOSE FEELINGS ARE.

...THAT I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE.

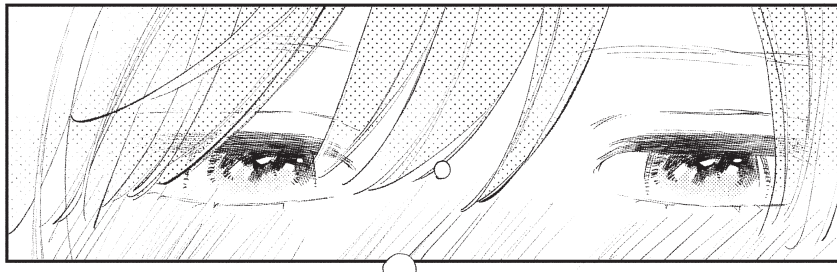


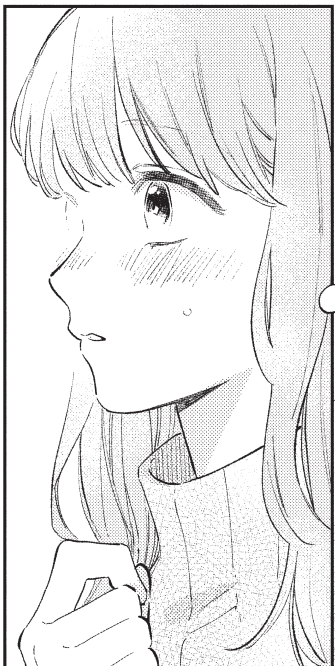
...THAT ARE PILING UP AROUND THIS LOVE...



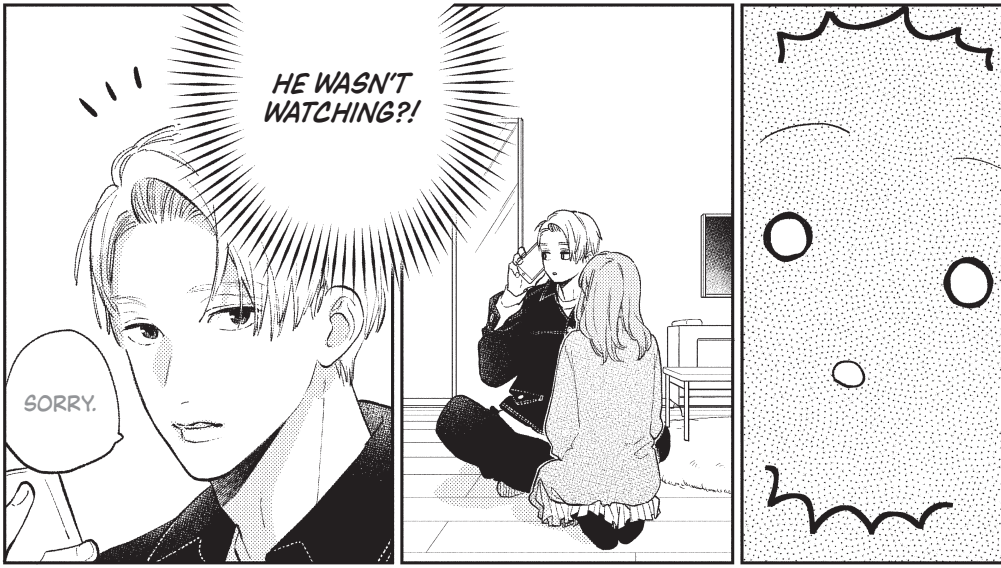
I WANT TO TELL YOU...

...HOW MUCH I'VE LEARNED THAT I DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE.

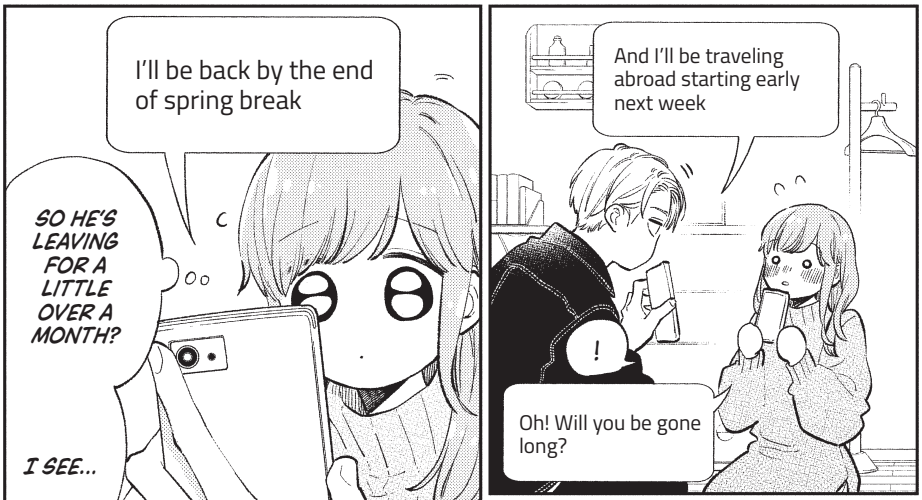




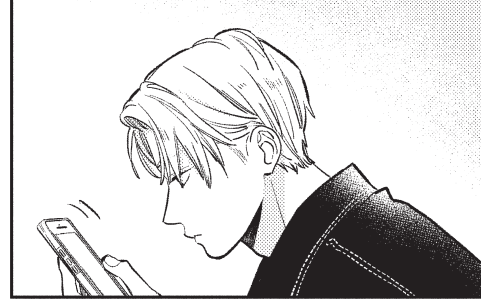
I WANT YOU TO KNOW IT ALL.


HE WASN'T WATCHING?!
SORRY.


Someone reserved the whole cafe for a party tonight so I have to go in early
HUH? SO SOON?

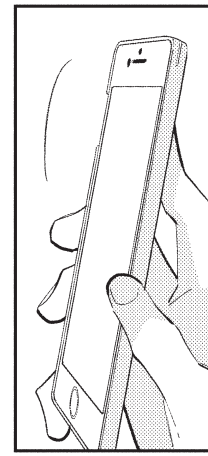

I'll be back by the end of spring break
SO HE'S LEAVING FOR A LITTLE OVER A MONTH?
I SEE...
And I'll be traveling abroad starting early next week
!
Oh! Will you be gone long?

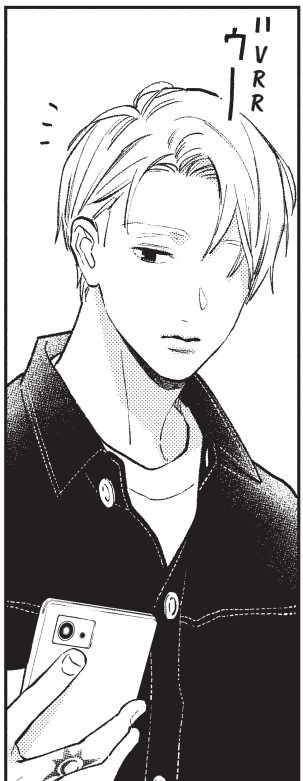


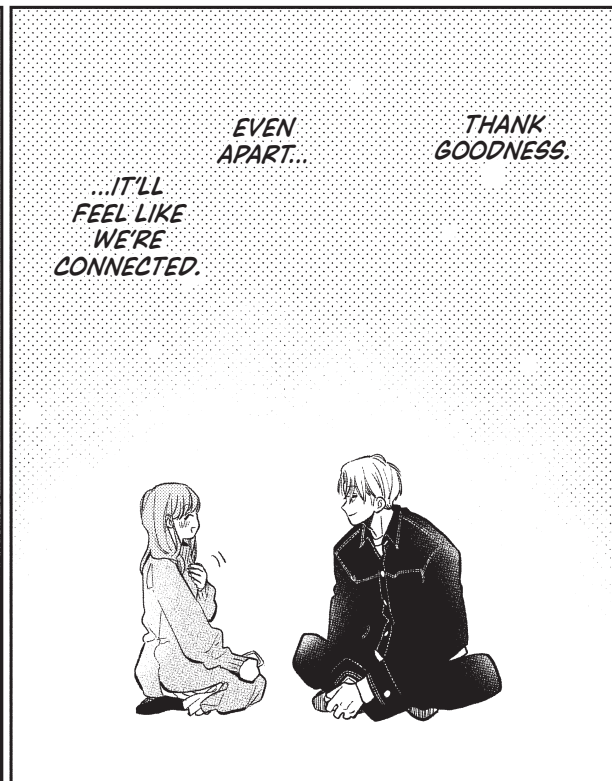


Send me sign language videos

So I can study on my trip

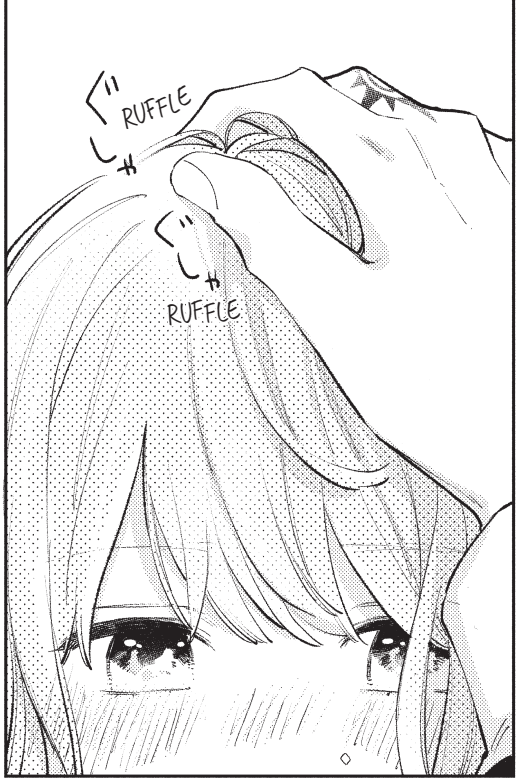







WHEN I GET BACK...
ヴ VRR
ヴ VRR
...I'LL SET ASIDE TIME...
...SO WE WON'T...
...HAVE TO RUSH.
ヴ VRRR

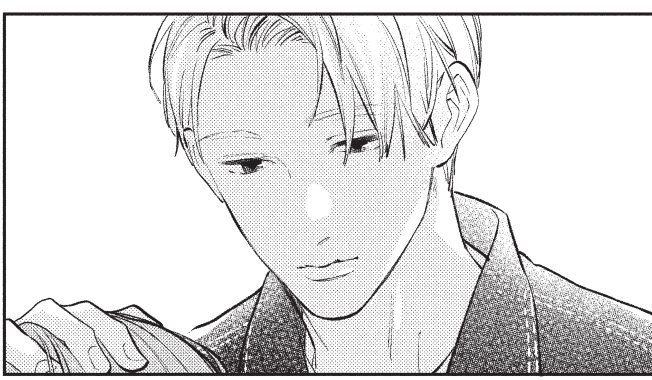

WHAT IS IT?
"WHY?"
TUG
...AHH.
BEFORE?
EARLIER?





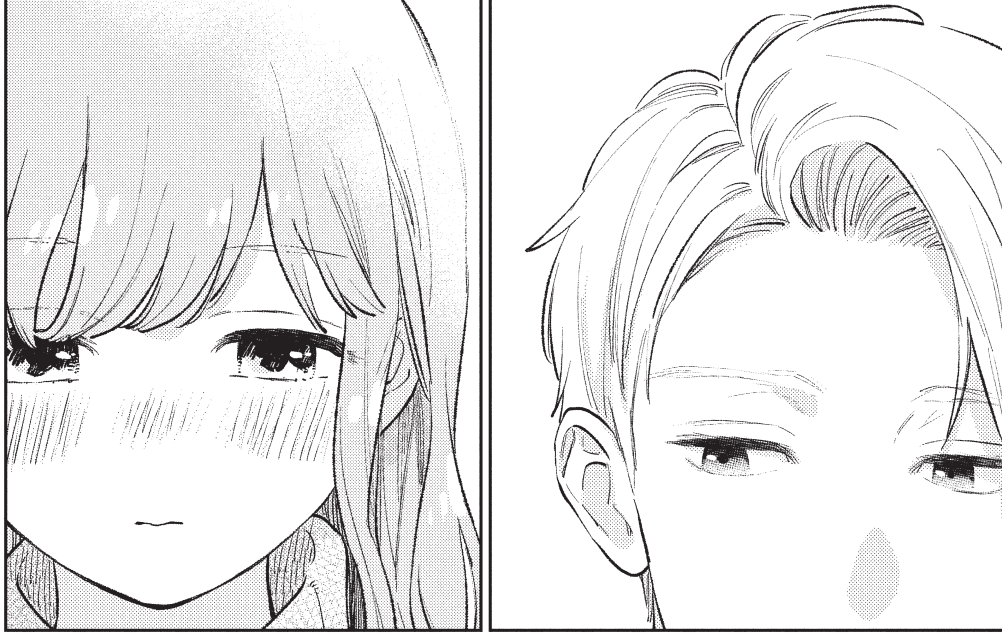
I ALREADY TAUGHT HIM...

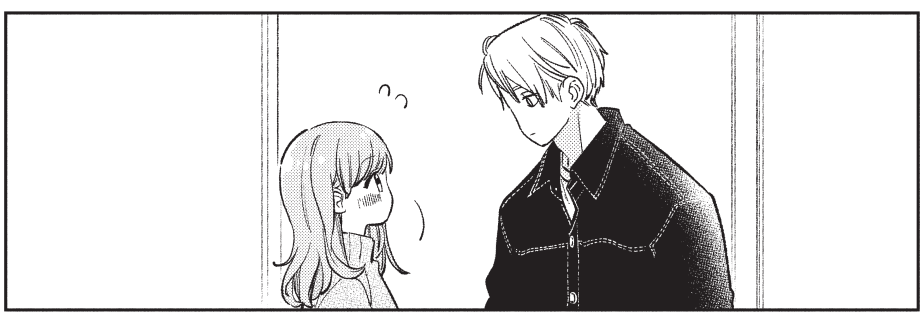
...WHAT PETTING SOMEONE'S HEAD...

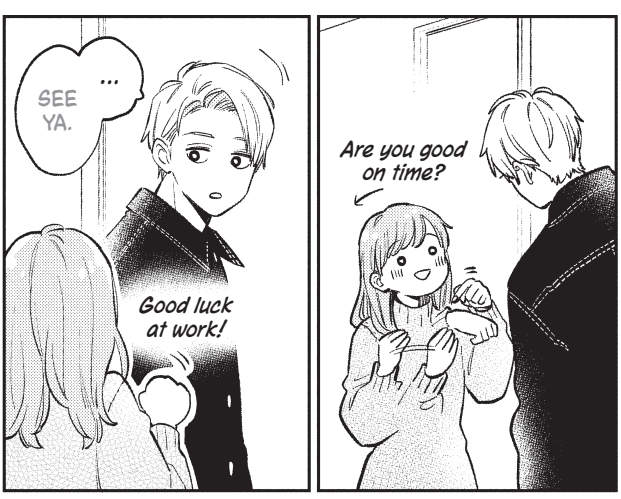


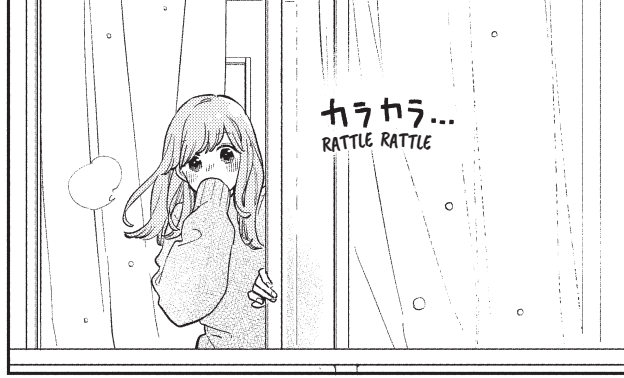
...MEANS IN SIGN LANGUAGE.


IS IT OKAY IF I FALL FOR YOU?
YUKI.





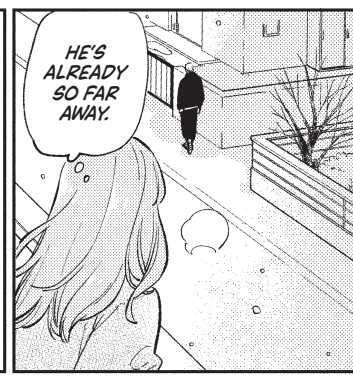

...
SEE YA.
Good luck at work!
Are you good on time?



DO YOU SEE ME...

...AS A WOMAN?

ITSUOMI-SAN.



BREATHING IN...

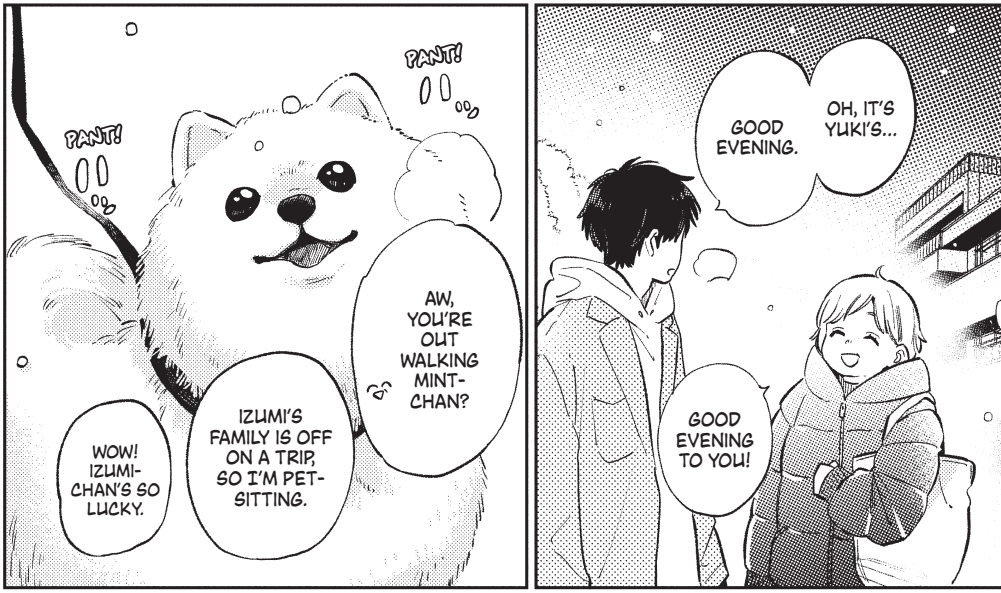
...THE CLEAR AND CHILLED OUTSIDE AIR...

...CALMS MY SENSES.



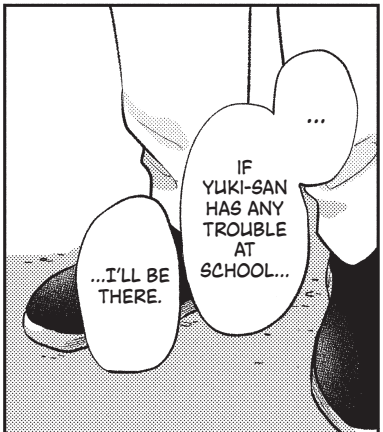

YUKI?!
IT'S RIN-CHAN.
AH, NOW HE'S TOO FAR AWAY TO SEE.
!
シャッ
SWISH
カラカラ
RATTLE RATTLE
ピタ…
BTAM
?
たたたたーっ
TMP TMP TMP TMP
ギュー
HUUUUG
HUH? WHAT IS IT?
DID ITSUOMI-SAN GO HOME?
I ONLY GOT TO SEE HIM...
...FOR A MOMENT.

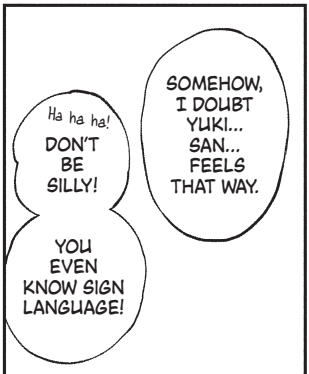

BUT THE FACT THAT HE DID SOMETHING YOU ONLY DO WITH SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO YOU...
...MADE ME SO HAPPY...
...I COULD DANCE THROUGH THE AIR.
SO COLD. SHEESH.
OUSHI-KUN?


PANT!
PANT!
AW, YOU'RE OUT WALKING MINT-CHAN?
IZUMI'S FAMILY IS OFF ON A TRIP, SO I'M PET-SITTING.
WOW! IZUMI-CHAN'S SO LUCKY.
OH, IT'S YUKI'S...
GOOD EVENING.
GOOD EVENING TO YOU!

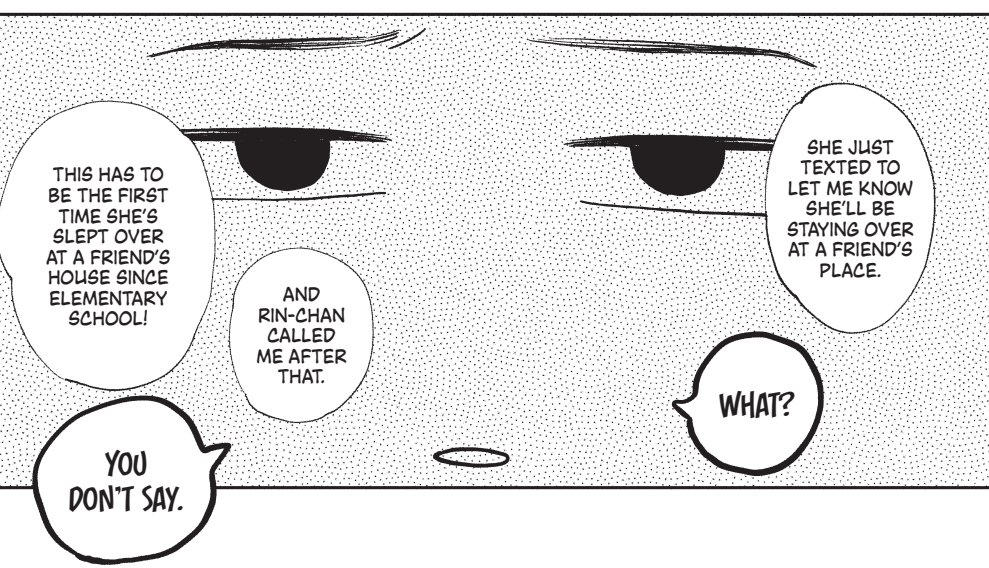

I KNOW YUKI FEELS SAFER HAVING YOU ATTEND THE SAME COLLEGE AS HER, TOO.

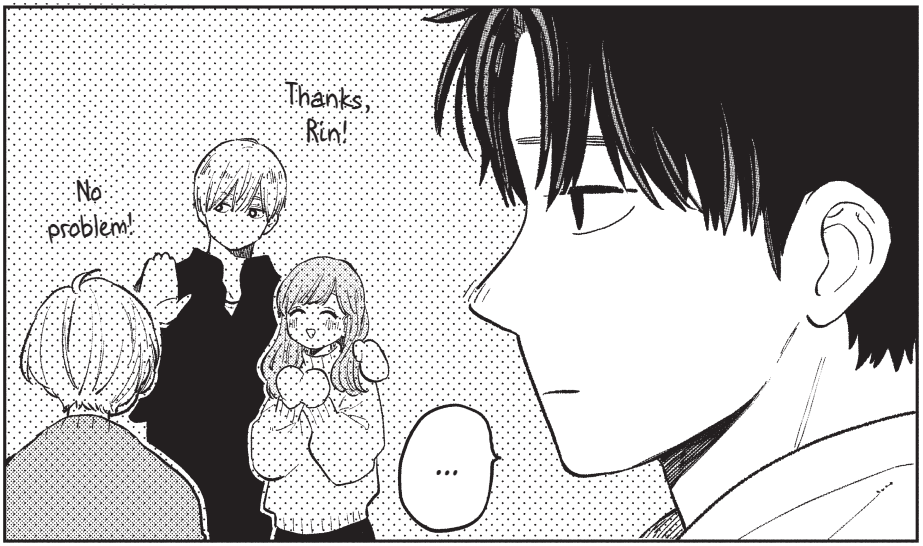

...
YOU WISH YOU COULD TRAVEL, TOO?
OH, IT'S NOT THAT.
I MEANT SHE'S LUCKY TO HAVE YOU AS AN OLD FRIEND, OUSHI-KUN.
...OH.

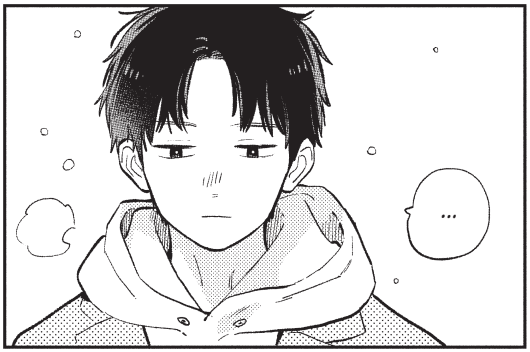

...
IF YUKI-SAN HAS ANY TROUBLE AT SCHOOL...
...I'LL BE THERE.

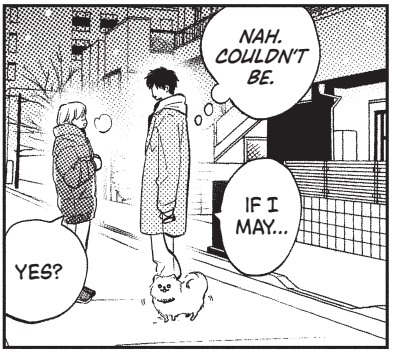

SOMEHOW, I DOUBT YUKI... SAN... FEELS THAT WAY.
Ha ha ha!
DON'T BE SILLY!
YOU EVEN KNOW SIGN LANGUAGE!

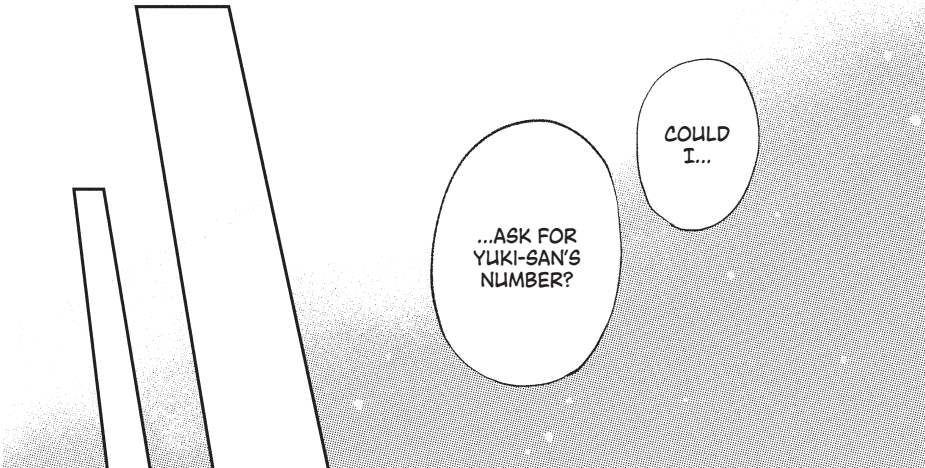

WHY, THANK YOU!
WE'LL CERTAINLY BE COUNTING ON YOU.
...
HOW HAS YUKI-SAN BEEN LATELY?
Oh!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
SHE CAN...
...DEPEND ON ME FOR ANYTHING.


THIS HAS TO BE THE FIRST TIME SHE'S SLEPT OVER AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
AND RIN-CHAN CALLED ME AFTER THAT.
YOU DON'T SAY.
SHE JUST TEXTED TO LET ME KNOW SHE'LL BE STAYING OVER AT A FRIEND'S PLACE.
WHAT?


Thanks, Rin!
No problem!
...

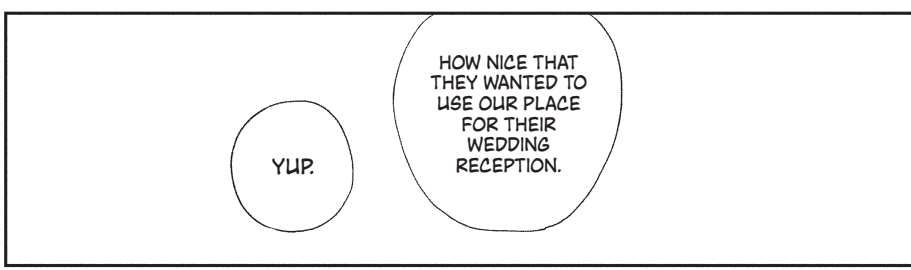

...


NAH. COULDN'T BE.
IF I MAY...
YES?


COULD I...
...ASK FOR YUKI-SAN'S NUMBER?

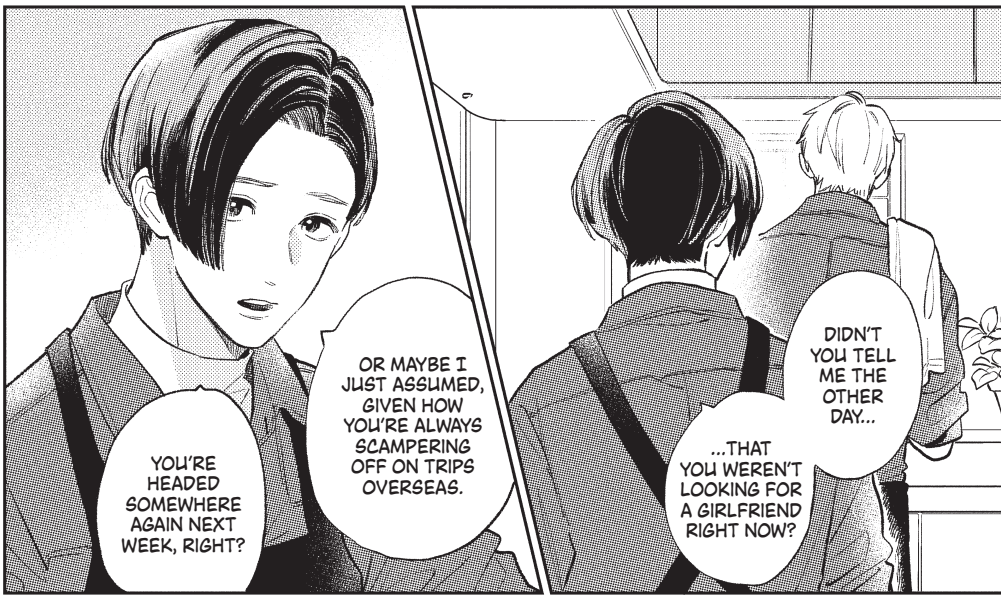

GOOD WORK TONIGHT.
RIGHT BACK AT YOU.

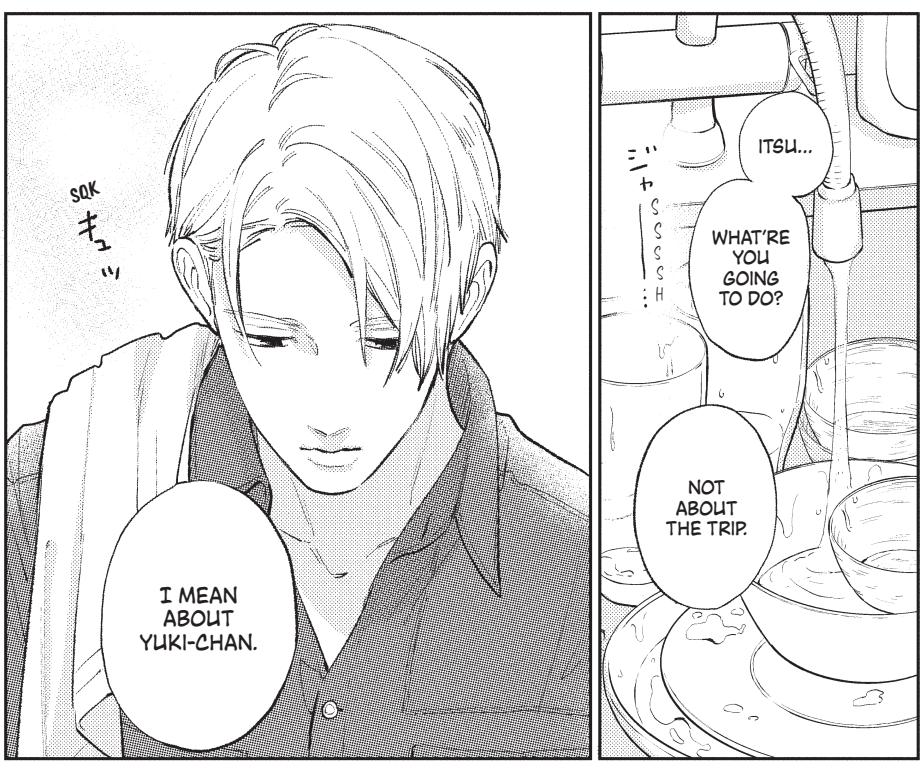

N' ROBIN


HOW NICE THAT THEY WANTED TO USE OUR PLACE FOR THEIR WEDDING RECEPTION.
YUP.


スルー SNUB
...
CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?


...I ALMOST FEEL BAD THAT YOU WERE THERE.
THOUGH GIVEN HOW GUYS USE RECEPTIONS TO PICK UP GIRLS ON THE GUEST LIST...
...

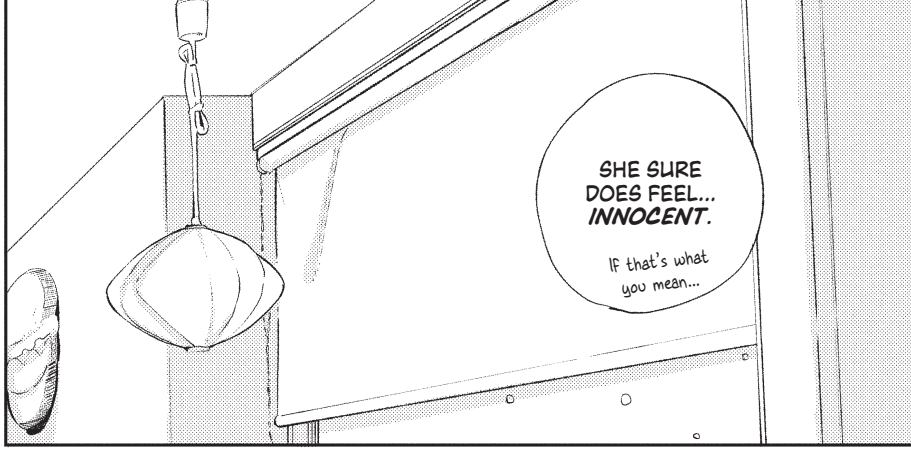

DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THE OTHER DAY...
...THAT YOU WEREN'T LOOKING FOR A GIRLFRIEND RIGHT NOW?
OR MAYBE I JUST ASSUMED, GIVEN HOW YOU'RE ALWAYS SCAMPERING OFF ON TRIPS OVERSEAS.
YOU'RE HEADED SOMEWHERE AGAIN NEXT WEEK, RIGHT?

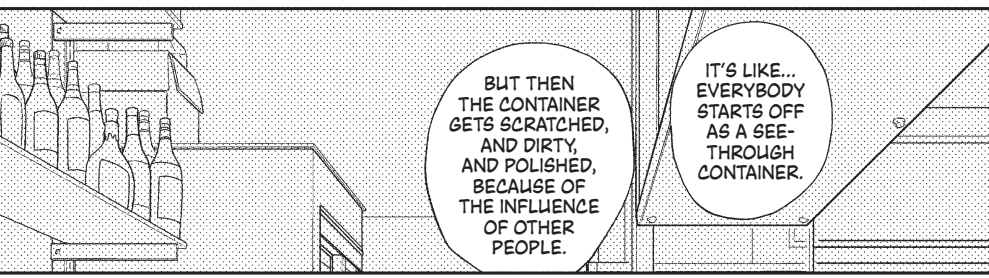

ITSU...
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?
NOT ABOUT THE TRIP.
I MEAN ABOUT YUKI-CHAN.
SQK キュッ

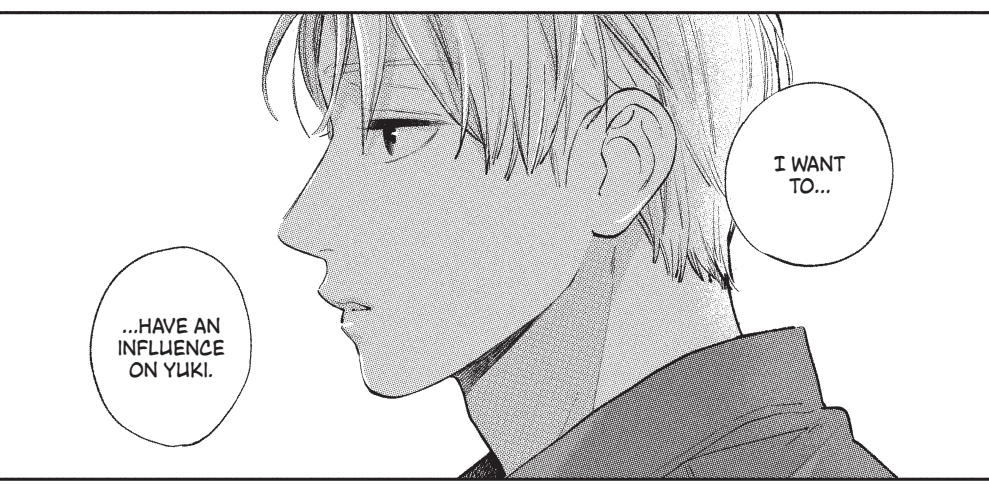

YOU'VE GOT A FEW SCREWS LOOSE! DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT?!
YOU JUST FLY TO A NEW COUNTRY WITHOUT BOOKING A HOTEL LIKE IT'S TOTALLY NORMAL!
ONE OF THESE DAYS YOU'RE GONNA FALL INTO A VOLCANO OR SOMETHING. YOU KNOW THAT?!
You're always barging into places like that!
WELL, JAPAN HAS FENCES. OTHER PLACES DON'T.
YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT!
BECAUSE I'M INSANELY WORRIED ABOUT YOU!
WHY DO YOU SOUND SO ANXIOUS?
HOW DO YOU FEEL...
...ABOUT YUKI-CHAN?
SHOVE
WATCH IT!
WHEN'D YOU GET SO BIG?
THAT'S NOT IT.
FINE! MAYBE I DO!
...ABOUT GIRLS, HUH, KYOUYA?
YOU SURE LOVE TALKING...
I'M A SUCKER FOR CELEBRITY GOSSIP!


...
THIS IS JUST MY SPECULATION, BUT...
I THINK MAYBE PART OF IT...
FROM THE FIRST TIME WE MET...
...I COULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF HER.

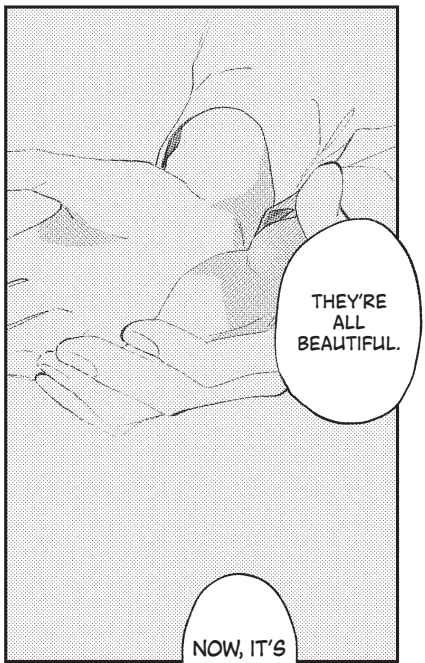

...IS BECAUSE HER EARS HAVE NEVER HEARD THE SOUND OF A CRUEL WORD.
SHE'S TRANS-PARENT.

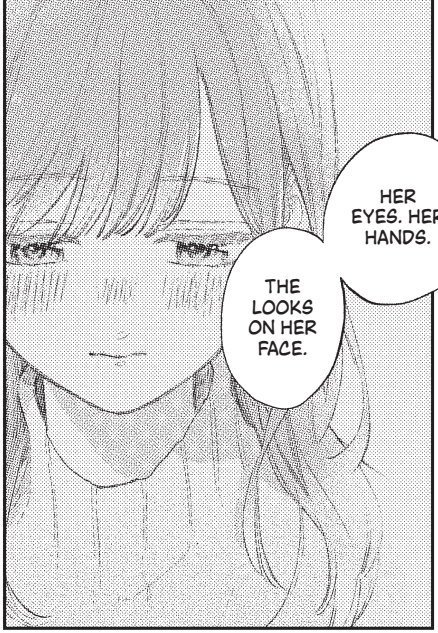

SHE SURE DOES FEEL... *INNOCENT*.
If that's what you mean...

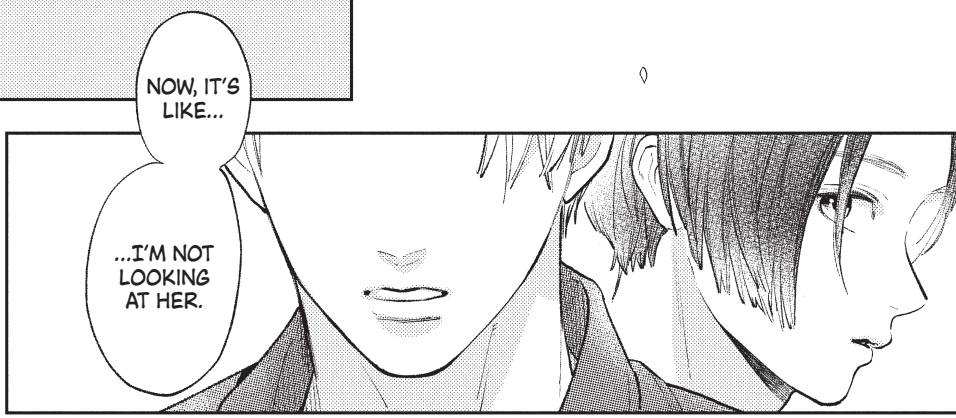

BUT THEN THE CONTAINER GETS SCRATCHED, AND DIRTY, AND POLISHED, BECAUSE OF THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER PEOPLE.
IT'S LIKE... EVERYBODY STARTS OFF AS A SEE-THROUGH CONTAINER.

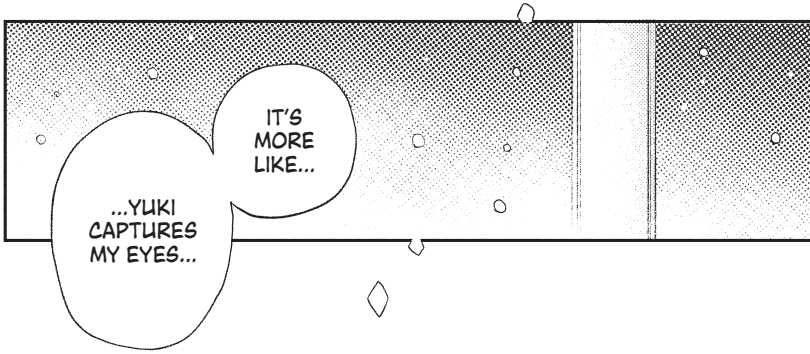

I WANT TO...
...HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON YUKI.


IT'S LIKE... I NEVER WANT TO LET HER OUT OF MY SIGHT.


THEY'RE ALL BEAUTIFUL.


HER EYES. HER HANDS.
THE LOOKS ON HER FACE.


NOW, IT'S LIKE...
...I'M NOT LOOKING AT HER.


IT'S MORE LIKE...
...YUKI CAPTURES MY EYES...


...AND EVERYTHING ELSE DISAPPEARS.
OH, MAN...!

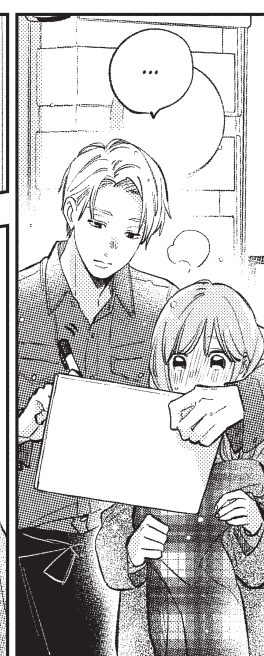

HE'S REALLY GOT IT BAD FOR HER.
BLUSH
カァー
DOESN'T HE REALIZE THAT?
RATTLE
カラン
RATTLE
カラン
OPEN
OH! WELCOME TO—
HUH?
ARE YOU GUYS CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT?
!!


ズイ
SHOVE
What about curfew?
NOT AT ALL! TAKE A SEAT!
SHE'S SLEEPING OVER AT MY PLACE TONIGHT.
CAN I BORROW HER FOR A SEC?
GRAB
?
??


YEAH. IT'S FINE.
I'm staying over at Rin-chan's tonight. Was it okay for us to stop by without calling?
SNIFFLE
PULL


YOU'RE WARM.


I didn't think I'd get to see you before I left on my trip.
NOD


...


I was planning to tell you after we saw each other when I got back, but
IF I...
...SHOW HER THIS...
...SHE'LL LOOK...
...AT ME.




I'll say it...
...in sign language.




A SIGN OF
AFFECTION



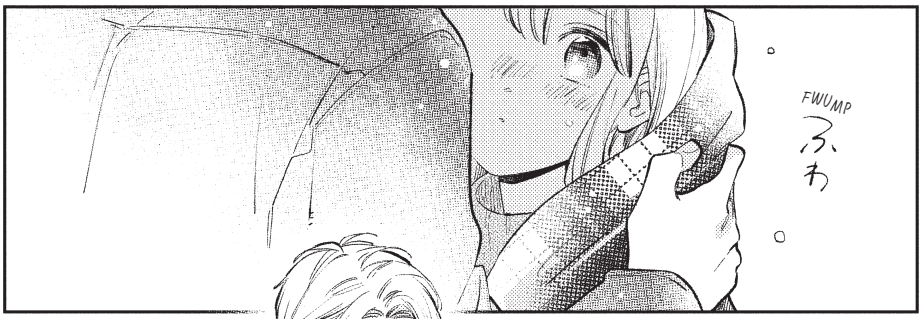
Sign.10

February 21st


...
CLACK
YUKI.
トン
TAP


THAT SIGN.
WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY USING IT?
I NEVER...
AND WAIT A MINUTE...
...TAUGHT HIM THAT ONE.


ドキッ
THADUMP
FWP
ぱっ


FWUMP
ふわ

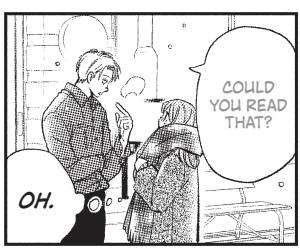

YUKI.

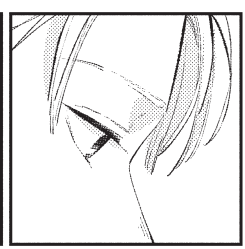

DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT WITH ME?

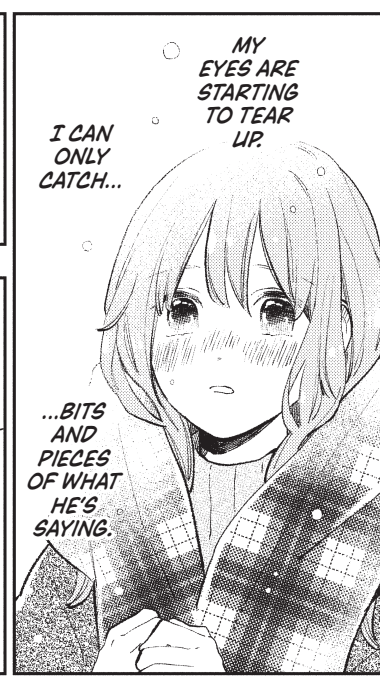

"WHY?"
...BECAUSE I WANT TO GO OUT WITH YOU.
...


I KNOW...
...EVEN I COULDN'T HAVE PREDICTED THIS.
I DO WANT TO KEEP TRAVELING OVERSEAS.
AND I'M SURE I'LL MEET ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE THERE.
BUT...

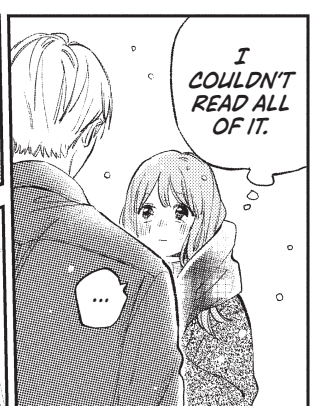

NO MATTER WHERE I GO...
...THERE'S ONLY ONE YUKI.


COULD YOU READ THAT?
OH.




MY EYES ARE STARTING TO TEAR UP.
I CAN ONLY CATCH...
...BITS AND PIECES OF WHAT HE'S SAYING.

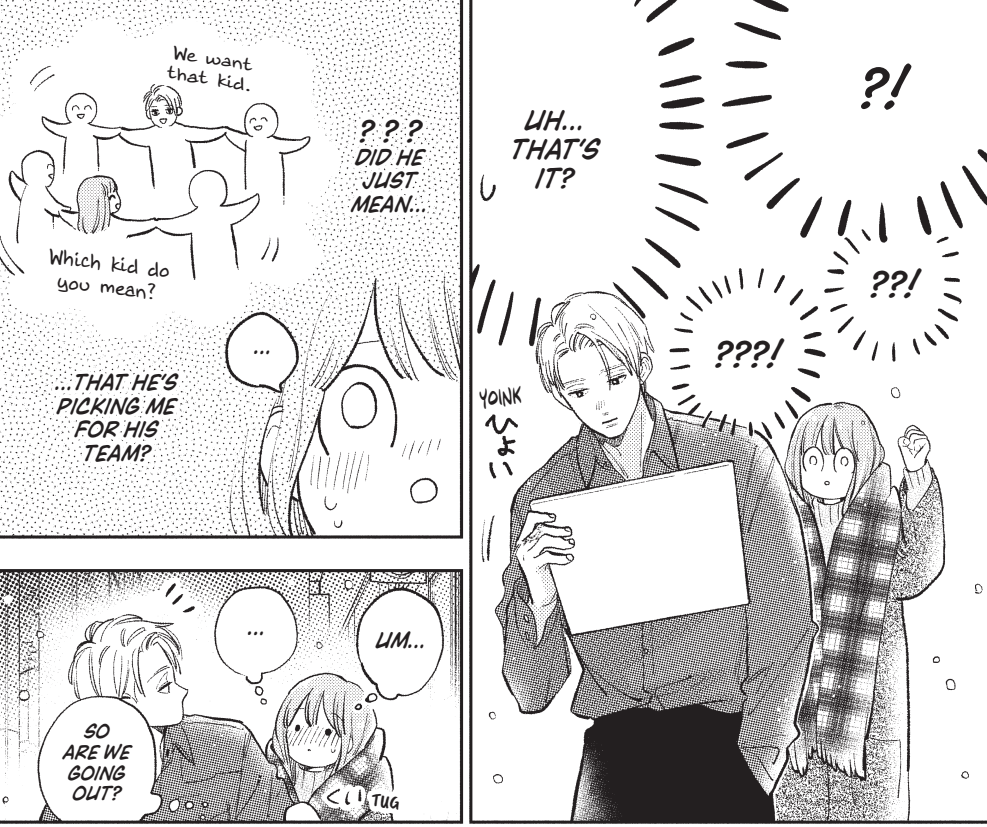

CRUNCH

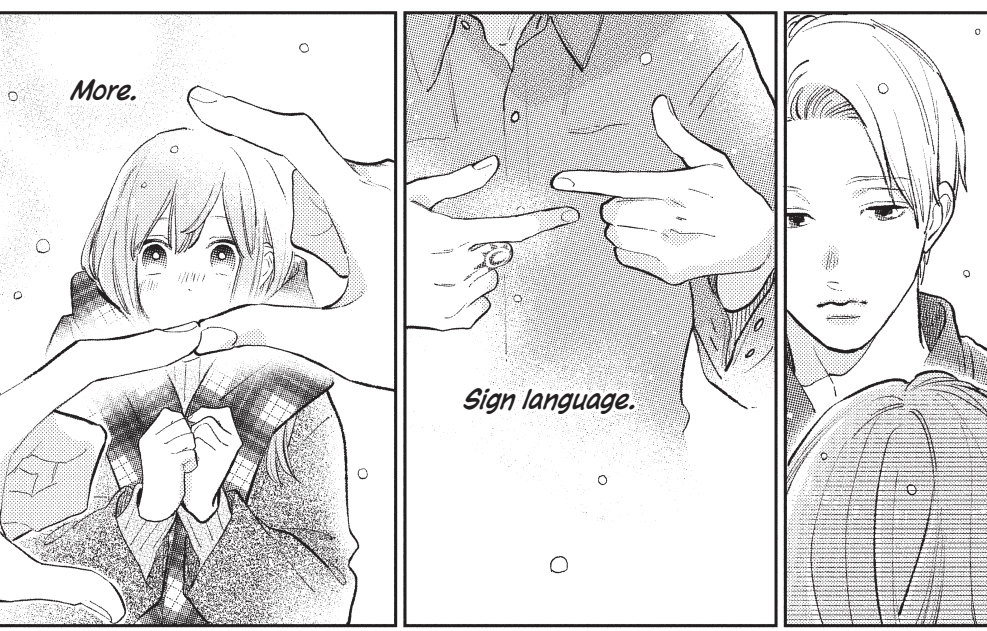

I COULDN'T READ ALL OF IT.
...


YUKI.
I WANT YOU.


IS THAT A...
...YES?

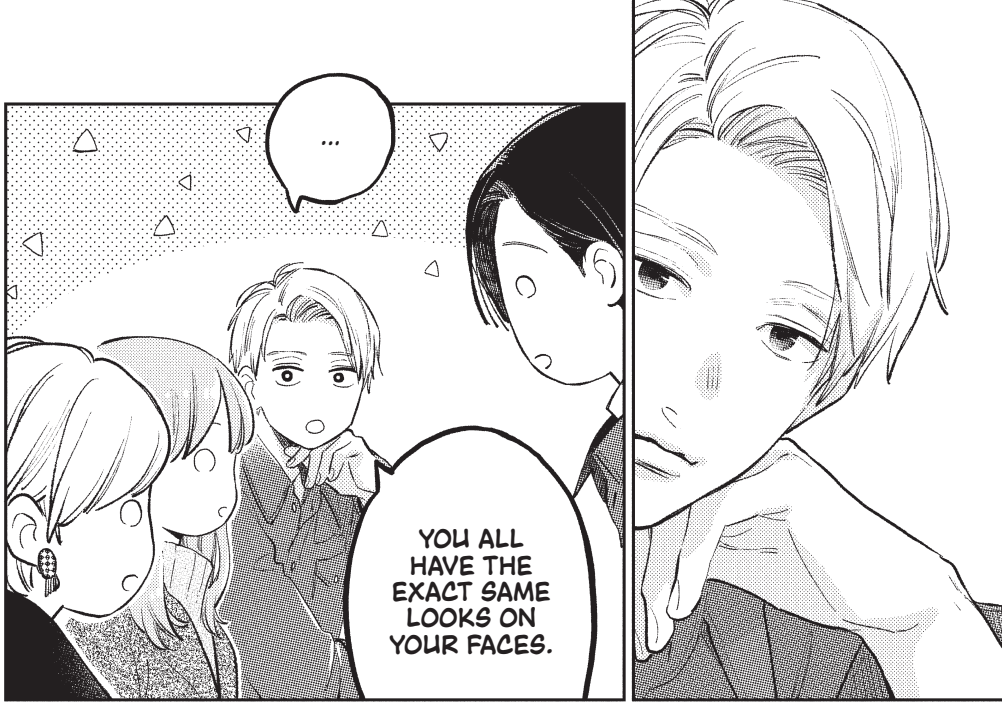

NOD
NOD
NOD
NOD
!!
...
!
THEN THAT'S THAT.
GOOD.

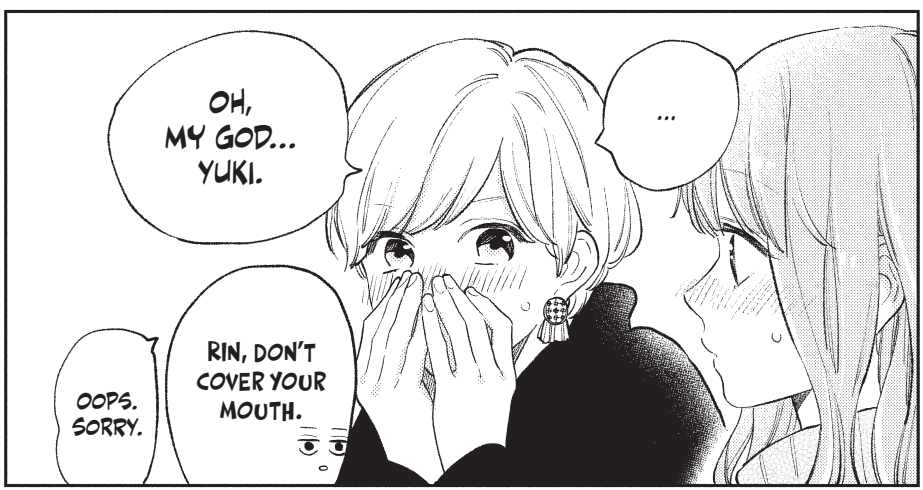

We want that kid.
Which kid do you mean?
? ? ? DID HE JUST MEAN...
...THAT HE'S PICKING ME FOR HIS TEAM?
...
UH... THAT'S IT?
?!
??!
???!
YOINK
ひょい
...
UM...
SO ARE WE GOING OUT?
TUG

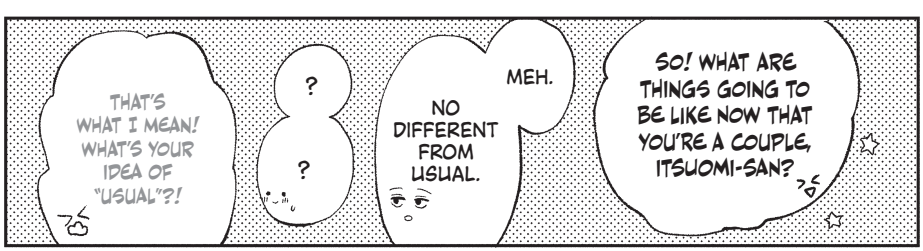

More.
Sign language.


PURSE
キュー…
I'll learn.
YANK
!
ウィーン
WHIRRRR
RATTLE
カラン
RATTLE
カラン

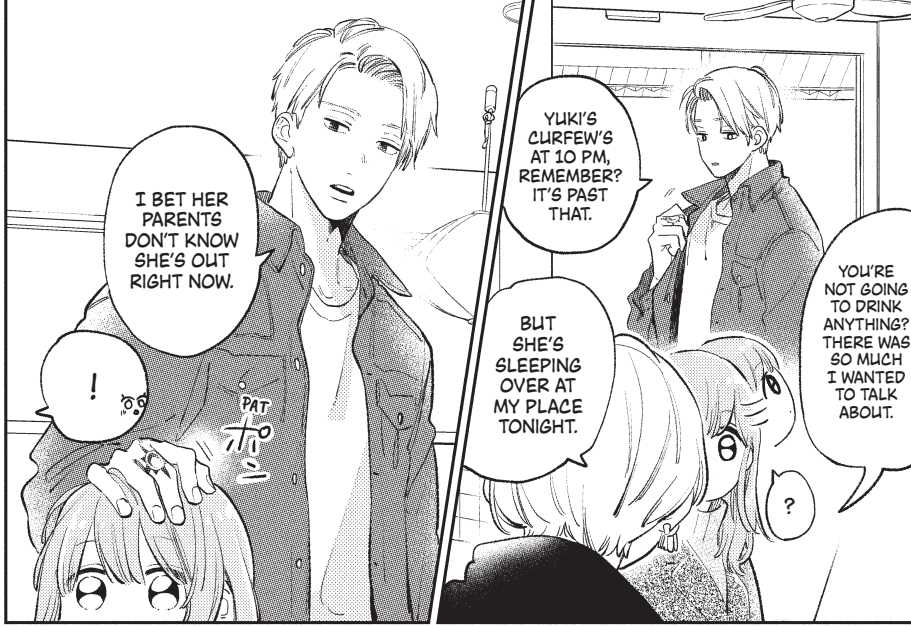

WE'RE A COUPLE.
BECAUSE WE'RE GOING OUT.
OH.
WHY DO YOU HAVE YOUR ARM AROUND HER SHOULDER?
UH.
CLATTER
WAIT, REALLY?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
YEP.
IT'S SERIOUSLY NOT COOL, OKAY, ITSUOMI-SAN?
YOU SHOULDN'T JOKE AROUND ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT!
WHOOOOA!
WHAAAAT?! WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN?!
THEY'RE SPEAKING SO QUICKLY, I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE SAYING!
AAAH!
CLATTER


...
YOU ALL HAVE THE EXACT SAME LOOKS ON YOUR FACES.

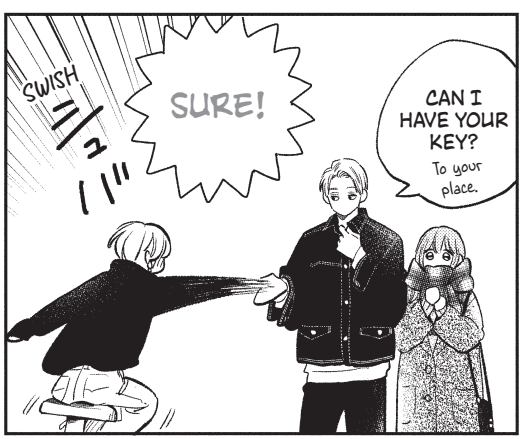

OH, MY GOD... YUKI.
...
RIN, DON'T COVER YOUR MOUTH.
OOPS. SORRY.


THAT'S WHAT I MEAN! WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF "USUAL"?!
?
?
MEH.
NO DIFFERENT FROM USUAL.
SO! WHAT ARE THINGS GOING TO BE LIKE NOW THAT YOU'RE A COUPLE, ITSUOMI-SAN?

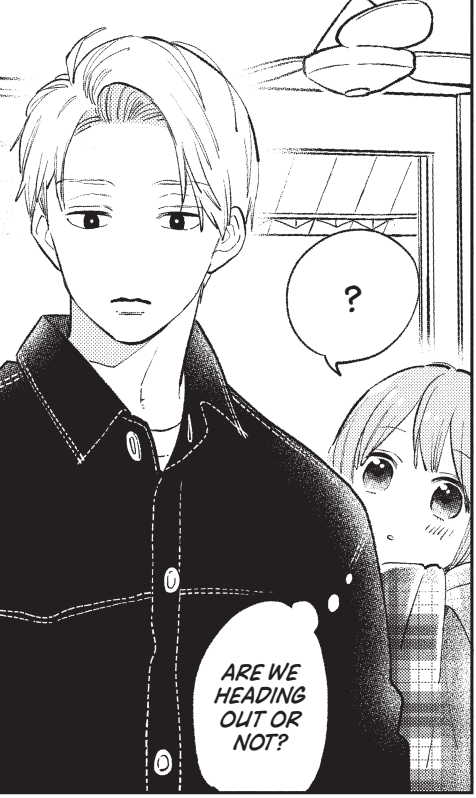

I'm so happy for you, Yuki!
RIN-CHAN FREAKING OUT OVER US GOING OUT...
...SUDDENLY MAKES IT FEEL A LITTLE MORE REAL.
I KNEW IT! ♡ I COULD TELL YOU LIKED YUKI! ♡
Aawww! ♡
NUZZLE
지 지
NUZZLE
SIP
Aawww, Yukiiii! ♡
WELL, YOU'D BETTER HEAD HOME.
CLATTER
HUH?! SO SOON?!
What is with this guy?!
...SO HARD TO READ.
HE REALLY IS...


I BET HER PARENTS DON'T KNOW SHE'S OUT RIGHT NOW.
!
PAT
YUKI'S CURFEW'S AT 10 PM, REMEMBER? IT'S PAST THAT.
BUT SHE'S SLEEPING OVER AT MY PLACE TONIGHT.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DRINK ANYTHING? THERE WAS SO MUCH I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT.
?


HUH?
NO, WHY DON'T YOU STAY AND HAVE A DRINK?
I GUESS WE'LL HEAD—
THAT'S TRUE...

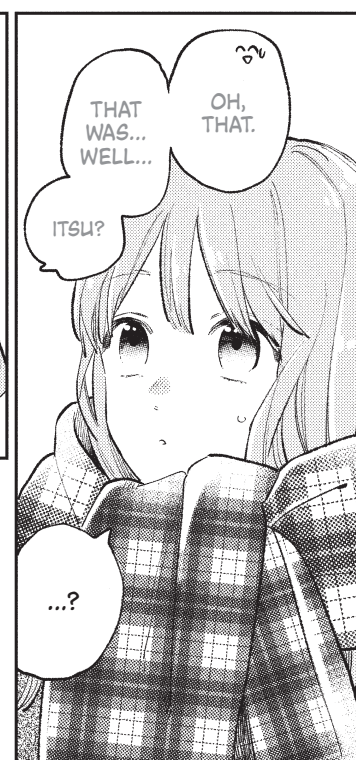

SWISH
SURE!
CAN I HAVE YOUR KEY?
To your place.

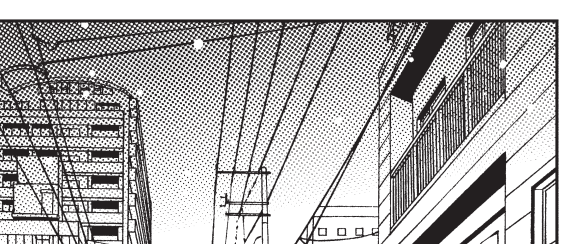

!!
KYOUYA, WALK RIN HOME WHEN YOU'RE DONE.
OKAY, SURE!
HAVE ANOTHER DRINK, RIN-CHAN.
!!! I WILL!!

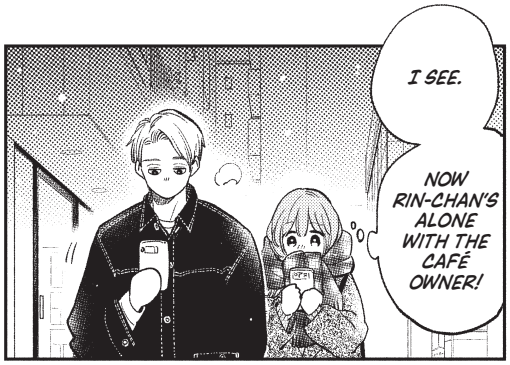

?
ARE WE HEADING OUT OR NOT?

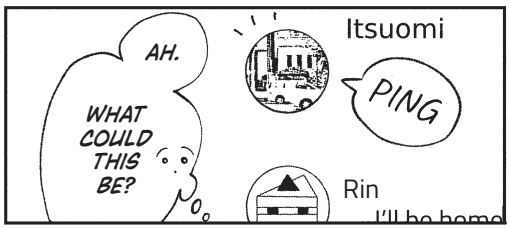

Ah!
THAT REMINDS ME.
:
YUKI MENTIONED A GIRL HANDED YOU A KEY BEFORE, ITSUOMI-SAN.
SHE WAS PRETTY WORRIED ABOUT IT.

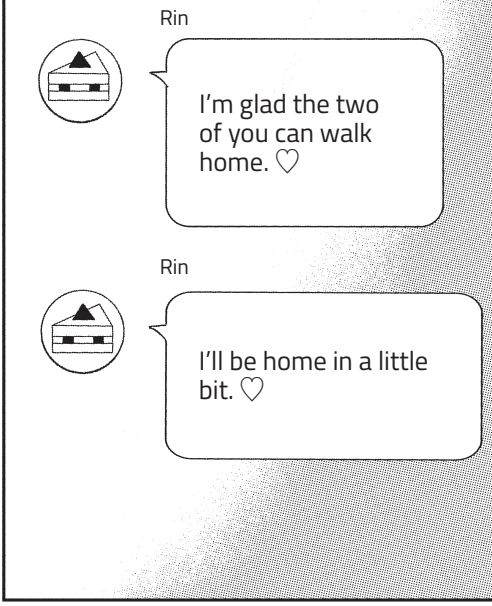

I GOT IT.
LET'S GO.
WHAT ABOUT RIN-CHAN?
OKAY! HAVE A SAFE WALK HOME! ♡

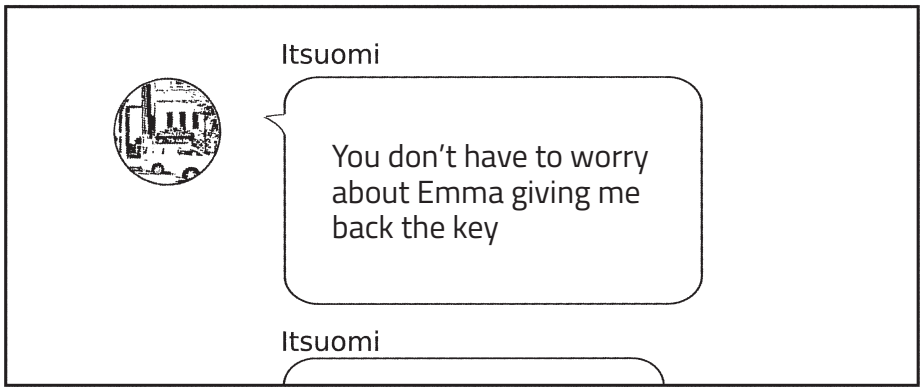

OH, THAT.
THAT WAS... WELL...
ITSU?
...?

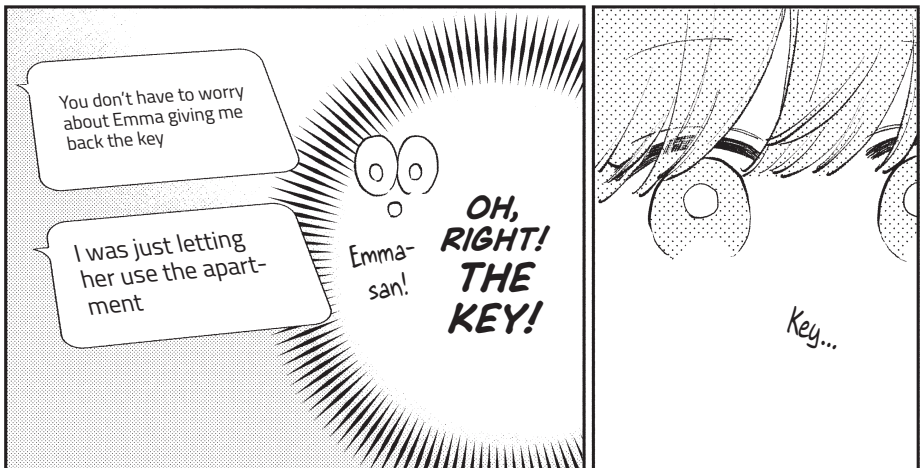



I SEE.
NOW RIN-CHAN'S ALONE WITH THE CAFÉ OWNER!

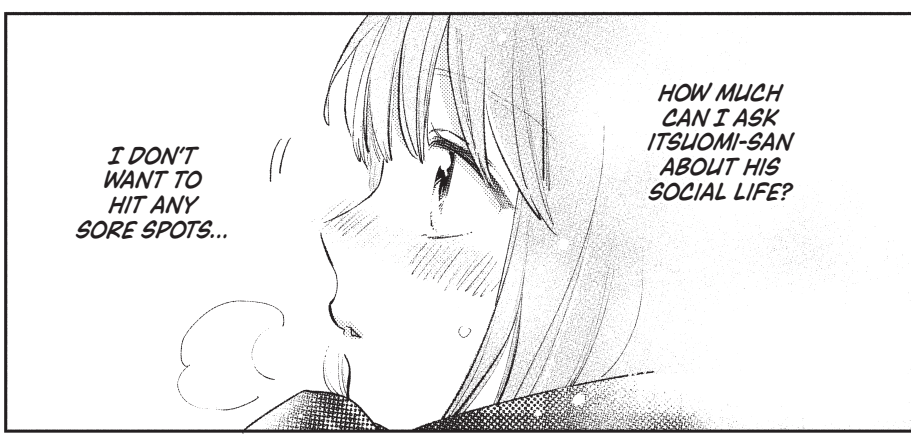

AH.
WHAT COULD THIS BE?
Itsuomi
PING
Rin


Rin
I'm glad the two of you can walk home. ♡
Rin
I'll be home in a little bit. ♡


Itsuomi
You don't have to worry about Emma giving me back the key
Itsuomi


You don't have to worry about Emma giving me back the key
I was just letting her use the apartment
Emma-san!
OH, RIGHT! THE KEY!
Key...

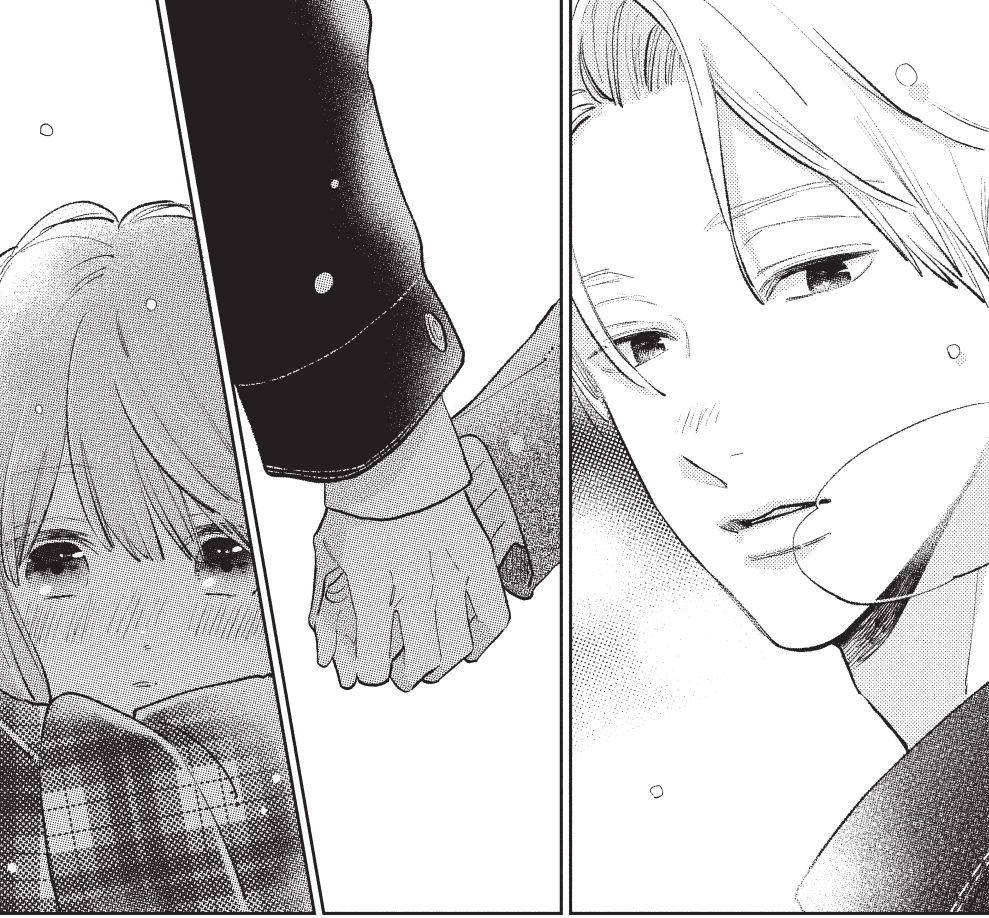


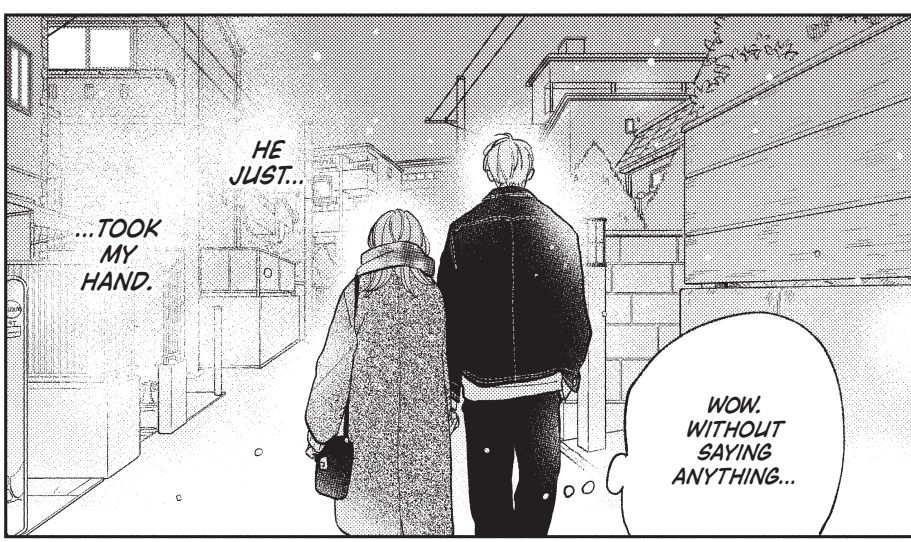


NO MATTER WHAT, I COULD NEVER...

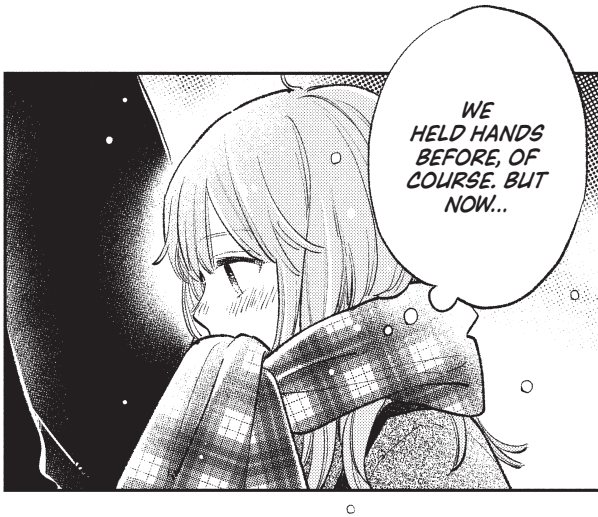
...NARROW ITSUOMI-SAN'S WORLD.


OH. OUSHI-KUN.
?
MY MOM? HE'S NEVER KNOWN IT BEFORE, SO WHY NOW?
And he's using the default avatar.
Oushi
I got your number from your mom.
Oushi
Add me to your contacts.
Oushi
It's me, Oushi.
OH, I'M STILL GETTING NOTIFICA-TIONS.
THAT REMINDS ME. THE OTHER DAY...
WHY WAS HE SO GROUCHY WITH ITSUOMI-SAN?
I'LL ADD HIM LATER.
DIG
ゴソ

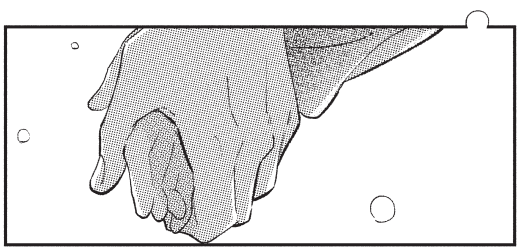



HE JUST...
...TOOK MY HAND.
WOW. WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING...

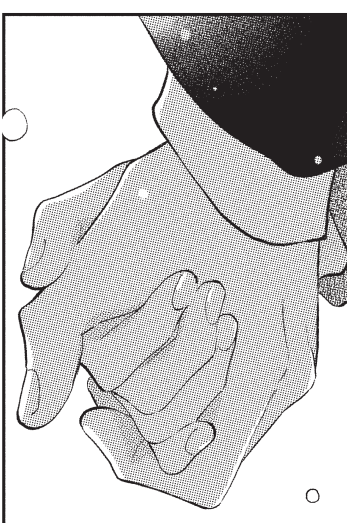


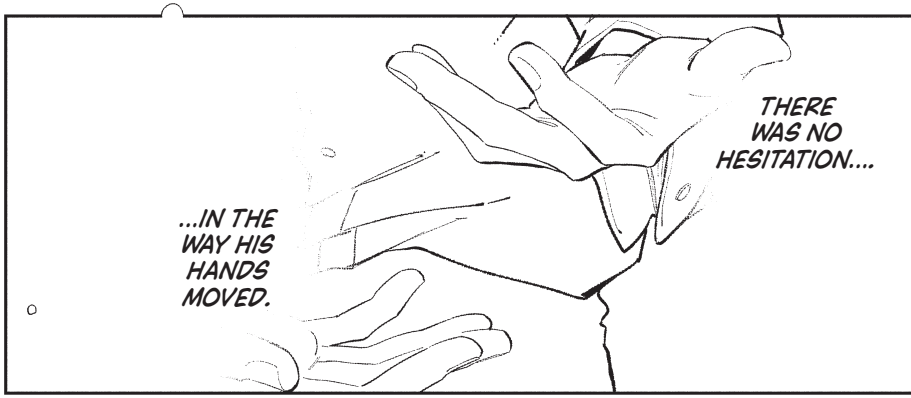


OUR HANDS AREN'T JUST TOUCHING...



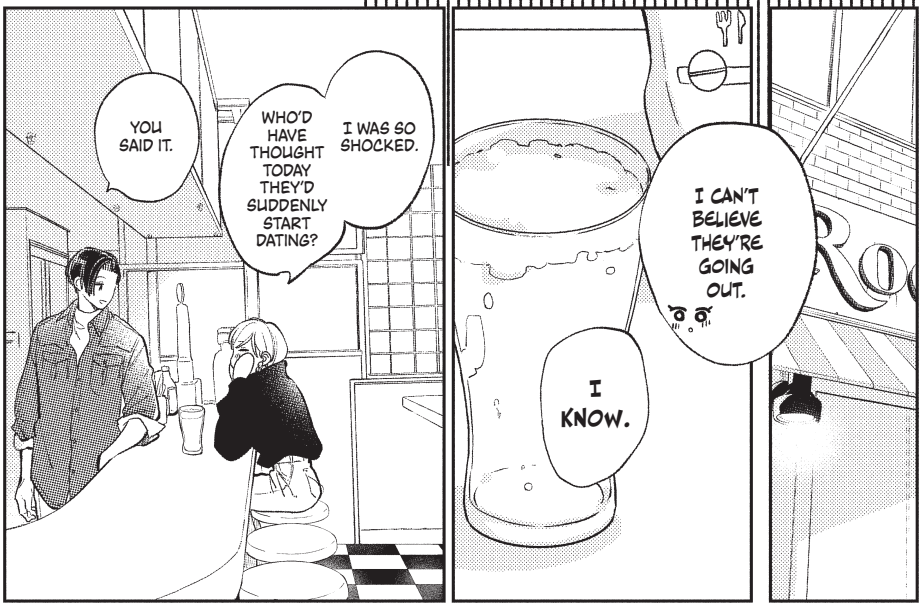
...THEY'RE CONNECTED.

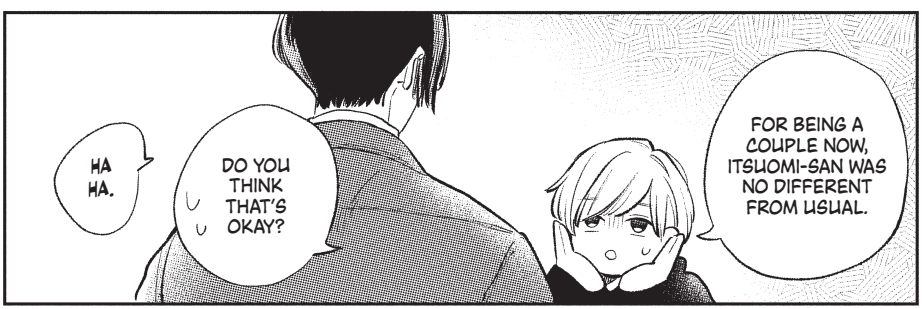



THERE WAS NO HESITATION....
...IN THE WAY HIS HANDS MOVED.

RIGHT NOW...


...IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE...
...I'M WALKING HOME.


YOU SAID IT.
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT TODAY THEY'D SUDDENLY START DATING?
I WAS SO SHOCKED.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE GOING OUT.
I KNOW.


HA HA.
DO YOU THINK THAT'S OKAY?
FOR BEING A COUPLE NOW, ITSUOMI-SAN WAS NO DIFFERENT FROM USUAL.


OH, THAT?
I THINK HE WAS...
...ON CLOUD NINE.
WHAT?! REALLY?


ROCKIN' RO
I THINK IT WAS PRETTY CLEAR ON HIS FACE TODAY.
OH, HE WASN'T HIDING IT.
ANYWAY, I'M HAPPY FOR THEM.
SO HE WAS TRYING TO HIDE HIS EMBARRASS-MENT?
Heh.
OKAY.
THAT GUY MARCHES TO THE BEAT OF HIS OWN DRUM, SO IF ANYTHING COMES UP, YOU JUST TELL ME.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I WISH THEM ALL THE LUCK.
OH.
RATTLE
カラン
RATTLE
カラン


...
WHERE'S ITSU-KUN?
HE ALREADY LEFT FOR THE DAY.

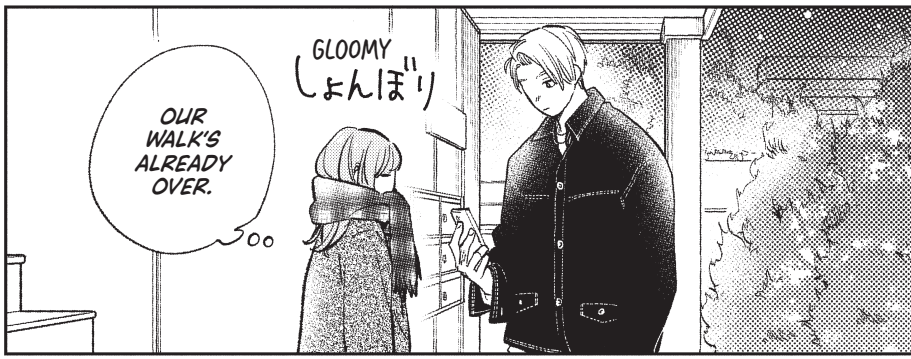

HEY, SHIN.

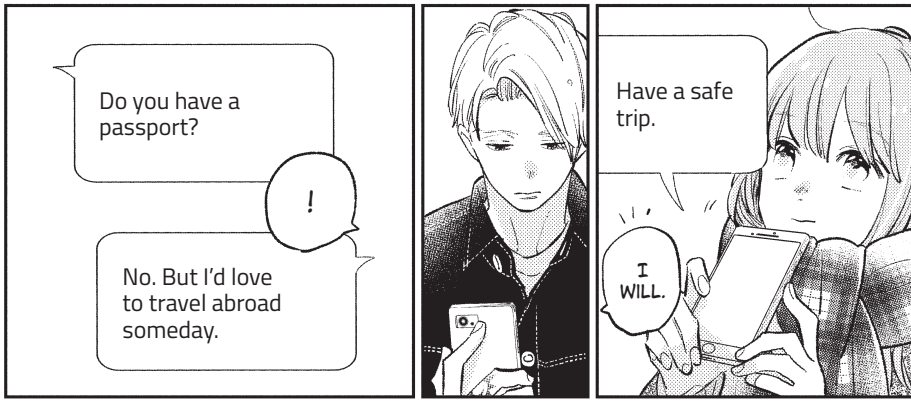

...
LEAVING SO SOON? WHY NOT HAVE A DRINK?


I'M CLEARLY INTER-RUPTING.

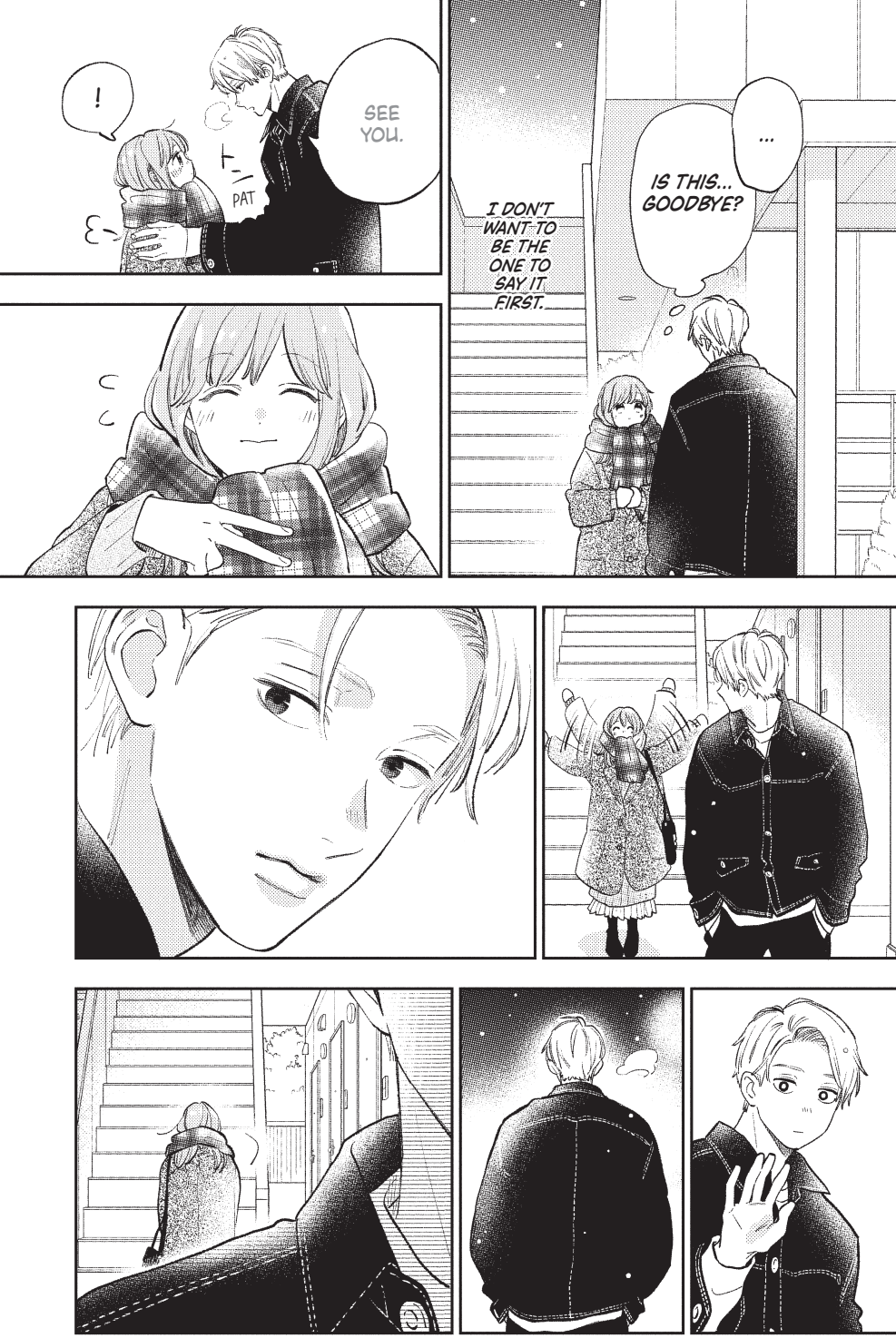

NAH.
...
?


UUUUH...
RATTLE RATTLE

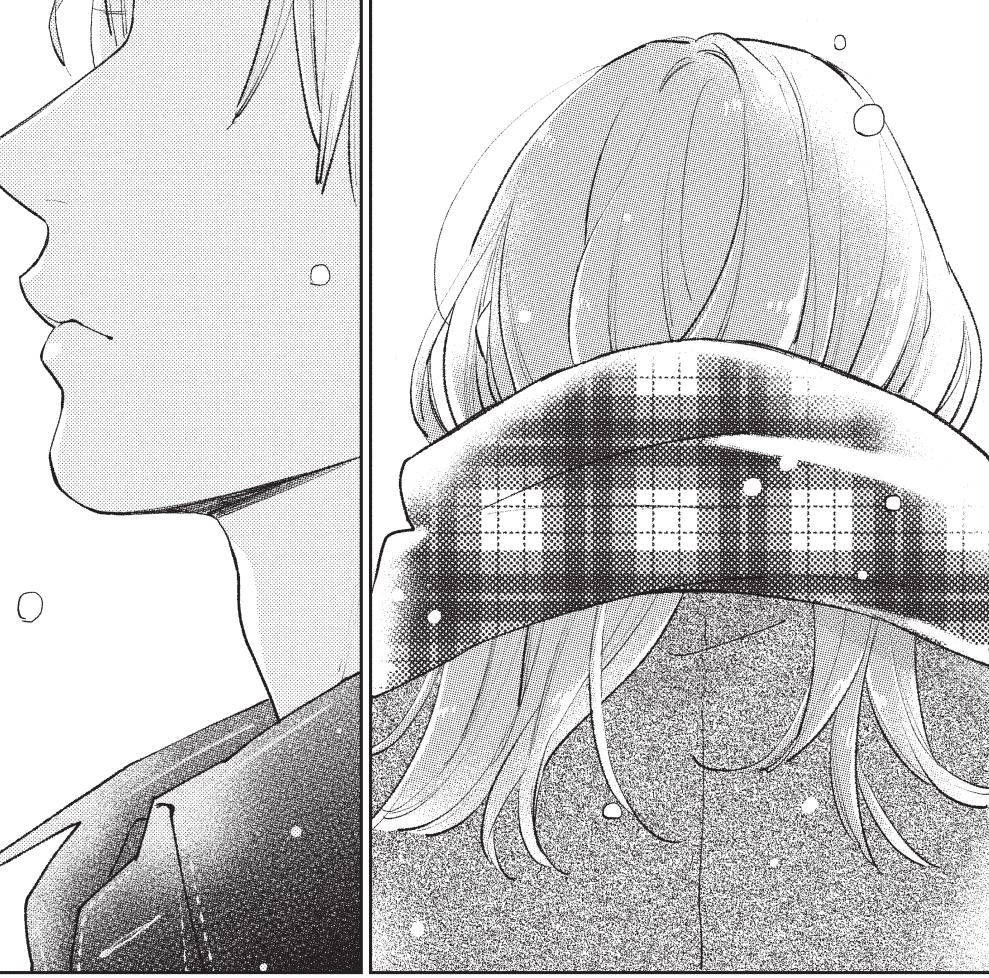

GLOOMY
しょんぼり
OUR WALK'S ALREADY OVER.

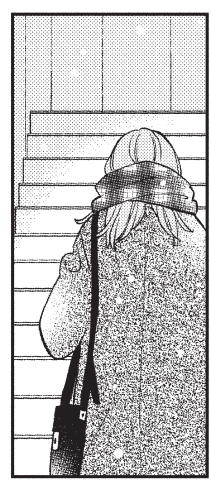

Do you have a passport?
!
No. But I'd love to travel abroad someday.
Have a safe trip.
I WILL.

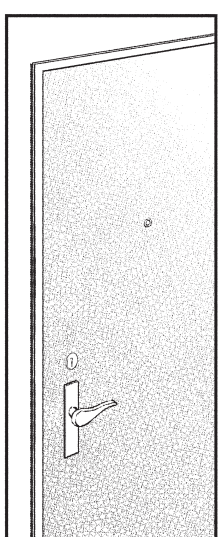

IF WE COULD GO... TOGETHER...
I'll start saving up for one.
It'll be my new life goal!
When you get one I'll take you with me


!
SEE YOU.
PAT
I DON'T WANT TO BE THE ONE TO SAY IT FIRST.
IS THIS... GOODBYE?
...

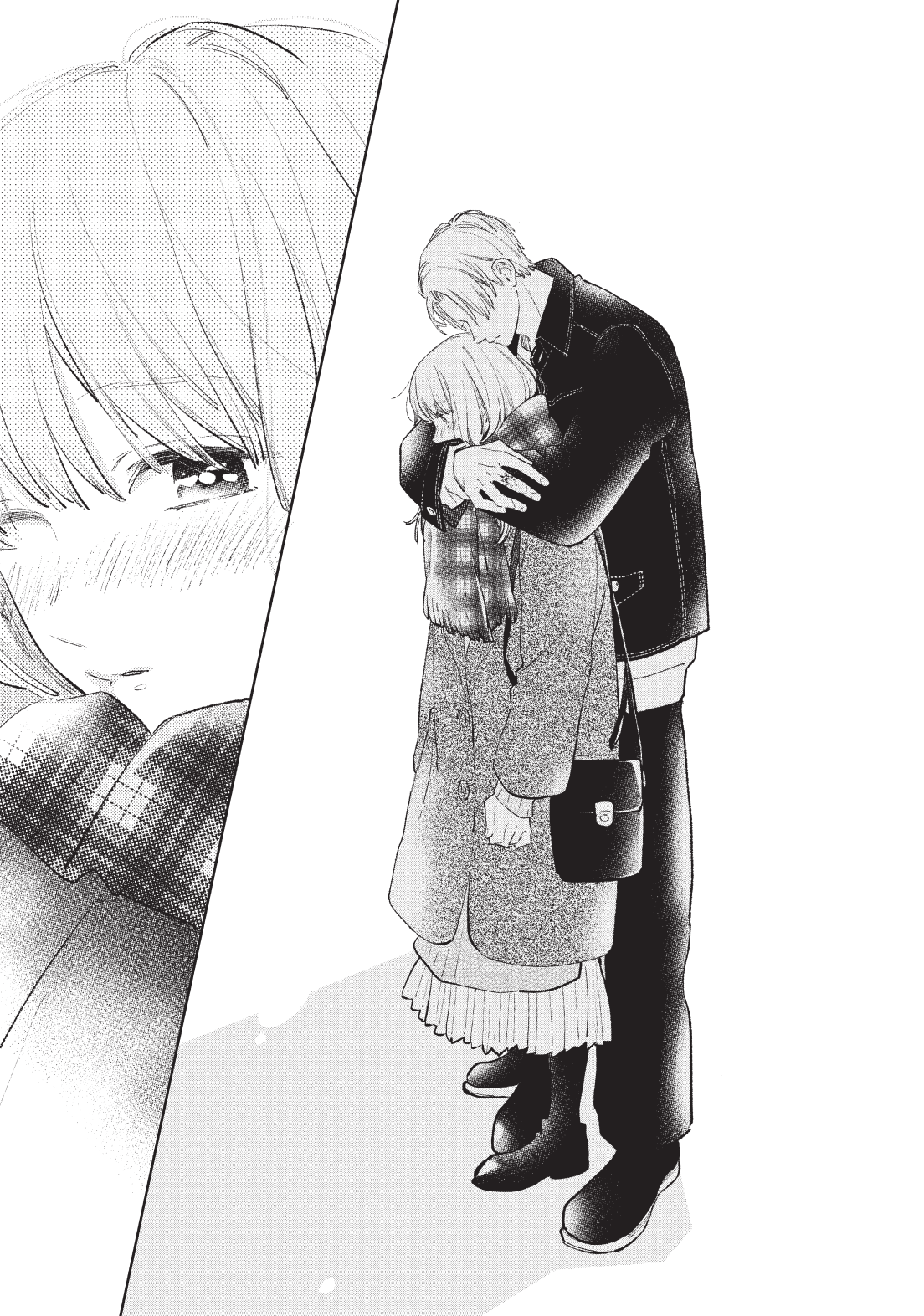

YUKI?



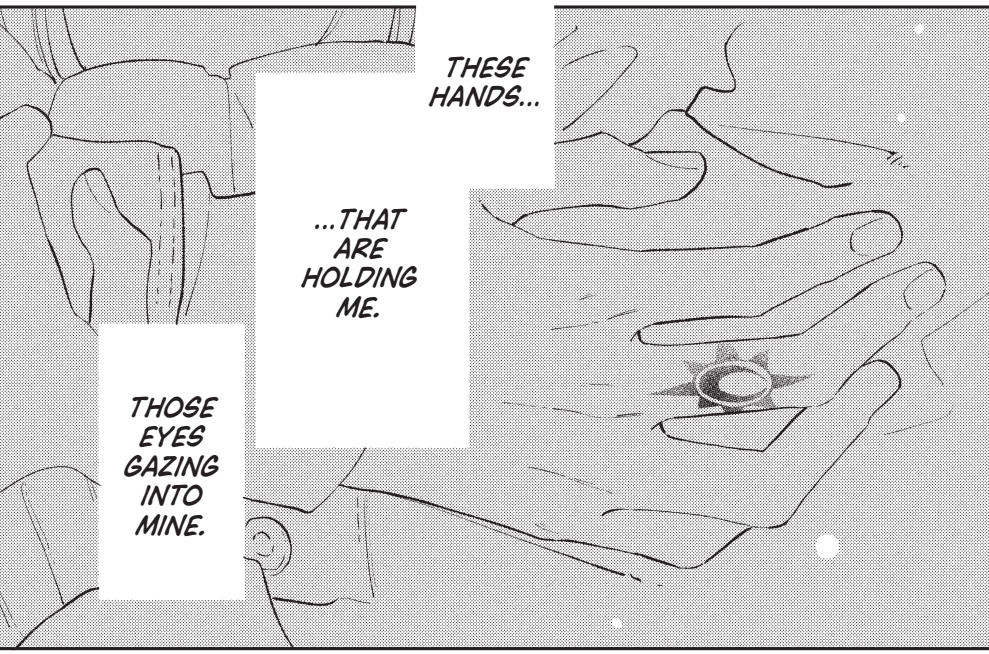









GRIP
キュッ



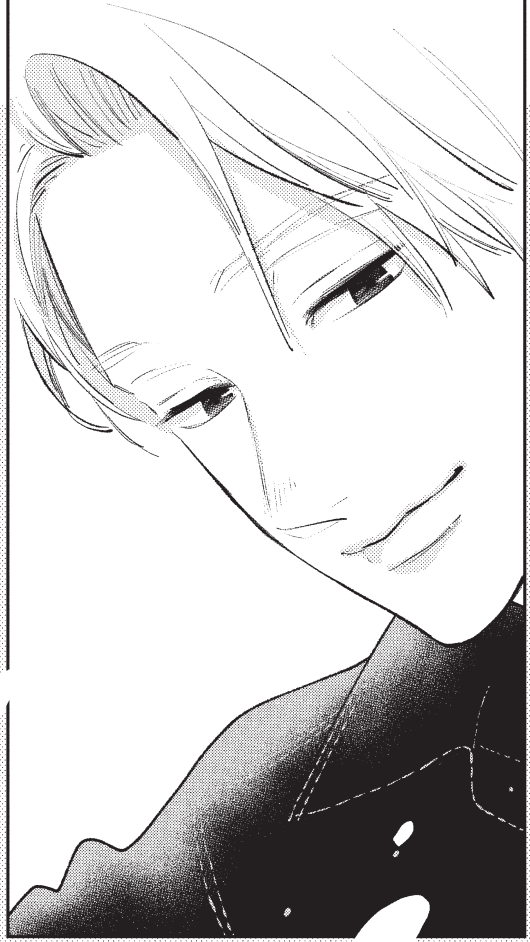


I DON'T WANT HIM TO THINK I CAN ONLY SEE HIM UP CLOSE.

SO I WOULD NEVER ADMIT THIS, BUT...

I'M EVEN IN LOVE WITH...

...THE ANGLE I HAVE TO TILT MY HEAD AT TO LOOK UP AT HIM.



EVERY EXPRES-SION...

...THAT HE POINTS MY WAY...

...RAINS DOWN ON ME LIKE A SHOWER OF LIGHT.

FEBRU-ARY 21ST...

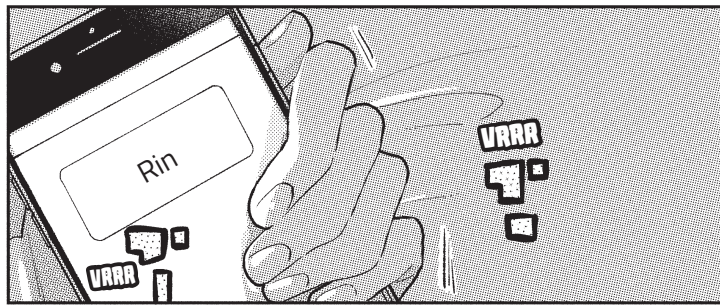
...THE DAY OUR WORLDS COME TOGETHER.



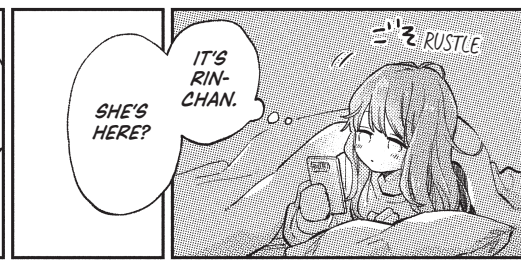
Sign.11

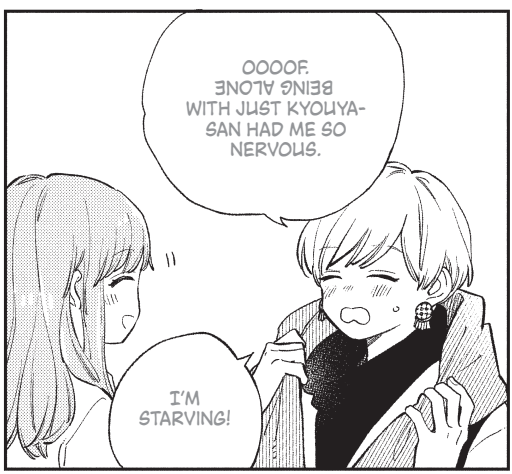
Far & Near


DOZING OFF, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN DUSK AND DAWN...
...I'M FILLED WITH THE FEELING...
...OF BEING WRAPPED UP..
...IN CRISP SHEETS AND PURE BLISS.

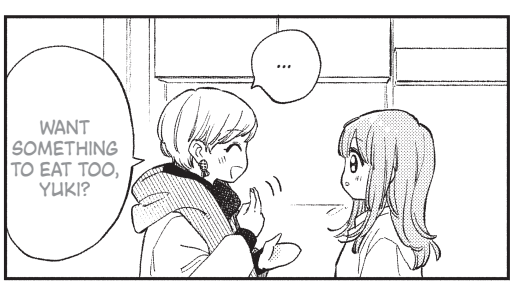

Rin
VARA
VARA

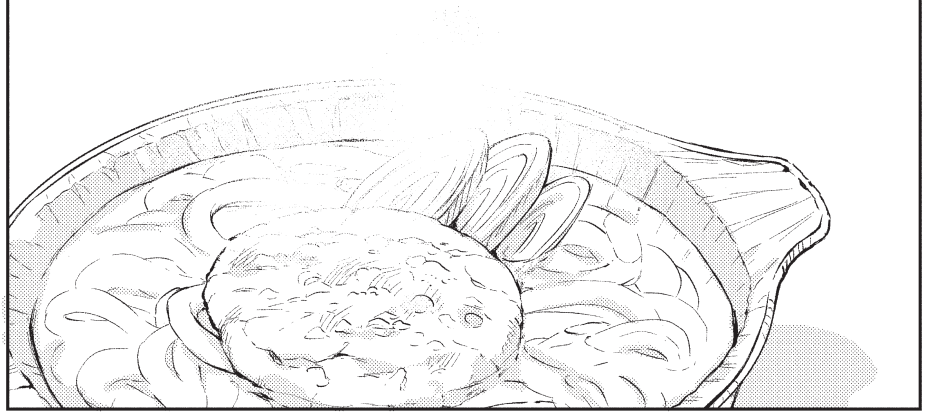

KLATCH

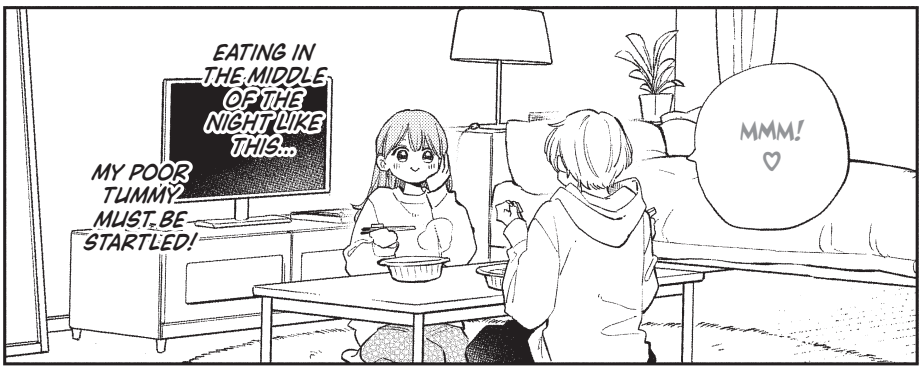

SHE'S HERE?
IT'S RIN-CHAN.
RUSTLE


OOOOF. BEING ALONE WITH JUST KYOUYA-SAN HAD ME SO NERVOUS.
I'M STARVING!

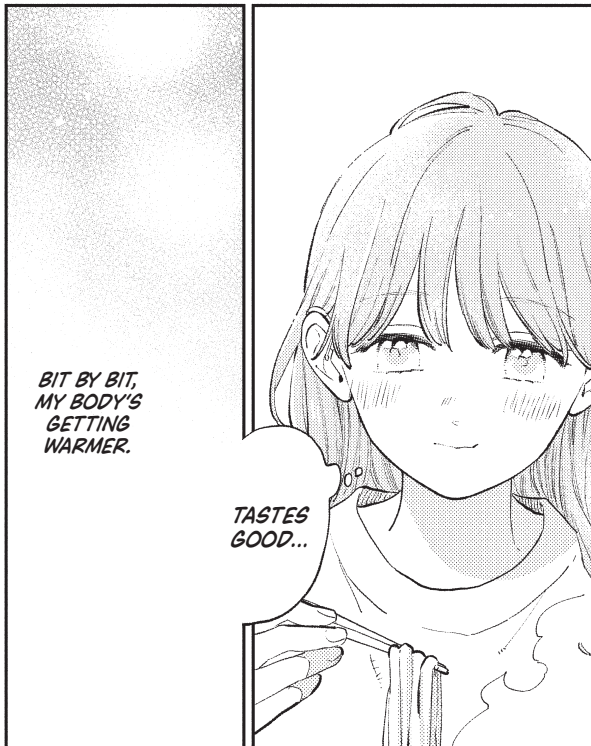

SORRY I'M LATE.


...
WANT SOMETHING TO EAT TOO, YUKI?




EATING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT LIKE THIS...
MY POOR TUMMY MUST BE STARTLED!
MMM! ♡


DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT WITH ME?
I'M WARM ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO TASTE HOW GOOD THIS IS...
I FEEL LIKE I'M DREAMING.
BUT I'M NOT.


BIT BY BIT, MY BODY'S GETTING WARMER.
TASTES GOOD...

Just a little.

He asked me to go abroad with him sometime.

Nice. That's so like Itsuomi-san.

You're lucky your boyfriend's so comfortable traveling abroad.

CHEW もぐ CHEW もぐ

Yuki, did you talk with Itsuomi-san afterward?

BOYFRIEND...

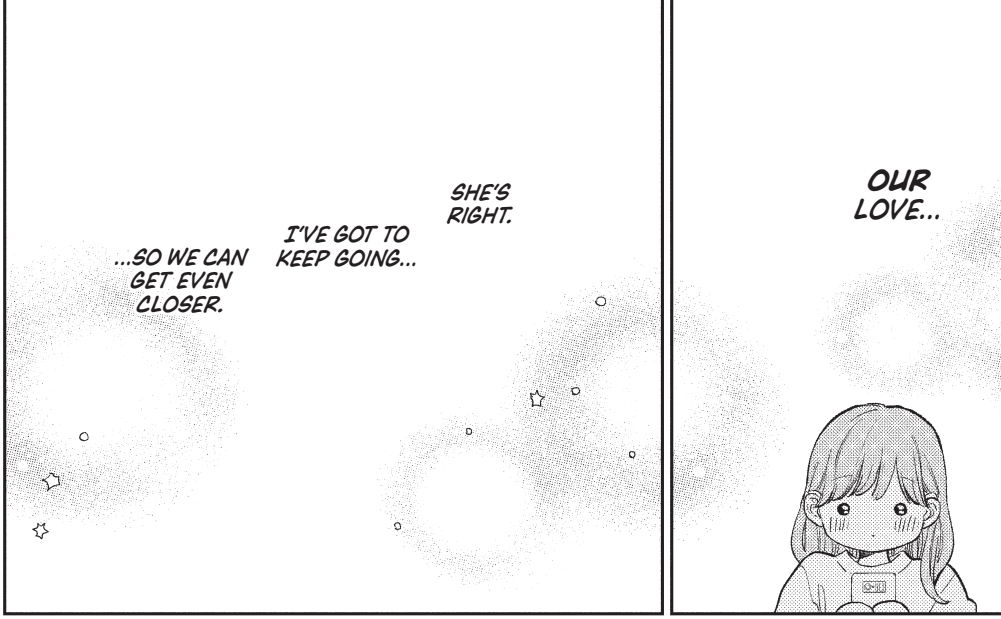
Should I really call him my boyfriend?

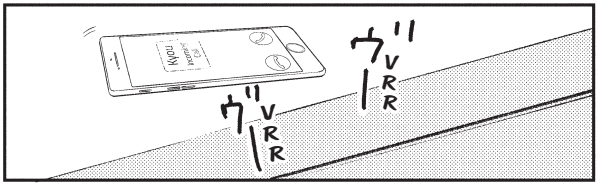
LOVE...

Of course. That's what he is, after all. ♡

Granted, you only just started going out.

You should work on deepening the love between you two.♡


...SO WE CAN GET EVEN CLOSER.
I'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING...
SHE'S RIGHT.
OUR LOVE...


ウィーン
ウィーン

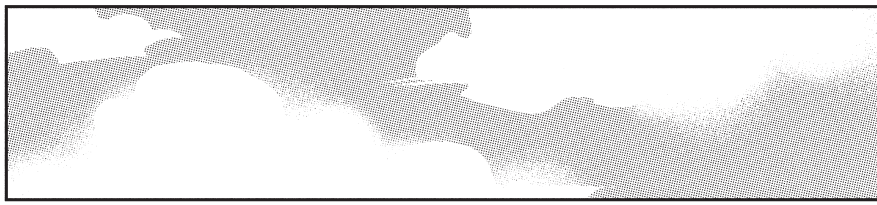

BEEP
HELLO?


Hey. Where you at?
RUMBLE ゴゥン
THE LAUNDRO-MAT.
ゴゥン RUMBLE
MY WASHER IS ON THE FRITZ.
How old is it? You should get a new one.
OH. YEAH?
Shin stopped by after you left.

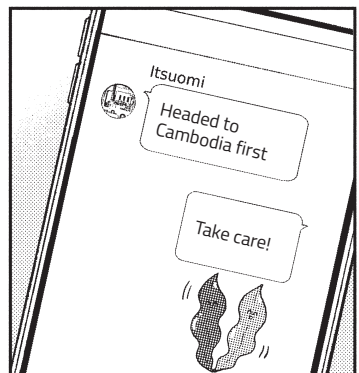

To go out with Yuki-chan.
WHAT ABOUT IT?
CHOOSE NOW?
Why'd you choose now of all times?
SO...
...
Pretty mean to go MIA right after you start going out.
You're going overseas at the start of the week.
What?!
I KNOW WE ONLY JUST STARTED THIS RELATION-SHIP, BUT...
Yeah?
I DIDN'T WANNA REGRET NOT ASKING HER OUT SOONER.
...

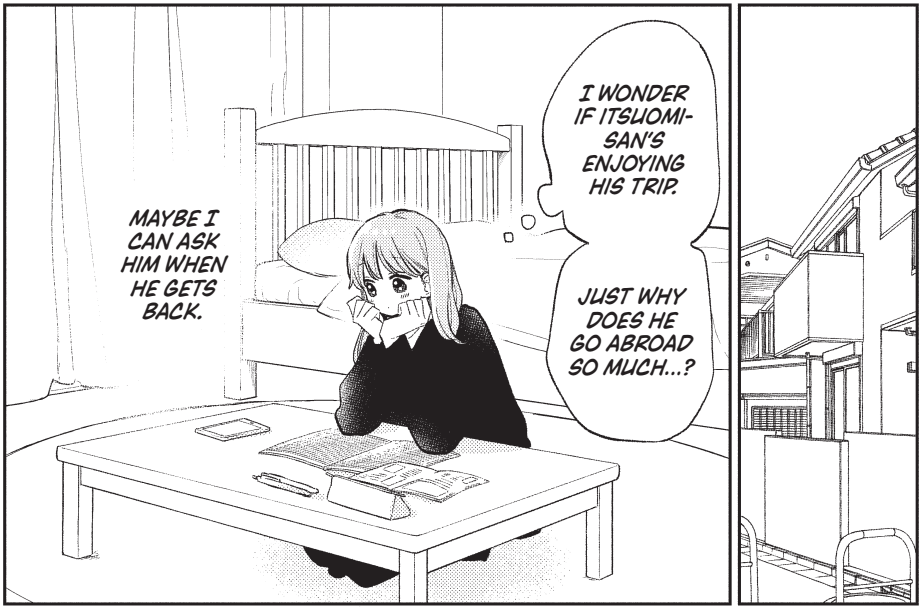

I DON'T THINK...
...I COULD EVER BREAK UP WITH YUKI.
BLUSH
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THAT WAY TOO.
NOTHING. JUST THINKING HOW YOUNG YOU ARE.
What's with the long pause?


...
I swear, that guy.
HE REALLY IS ON CLOUD NINE.
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU TWO.
Thanks.
TALK TO YOU LATER.
I MEAN... I'M NOT SAYING YOU'RE WRONG.
IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S THE FIRST GIRLFRIEND YOU'VE EVER HAD.

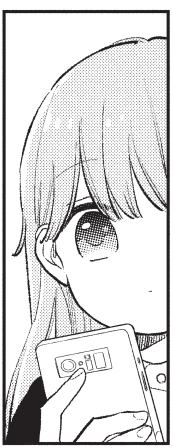



F
C

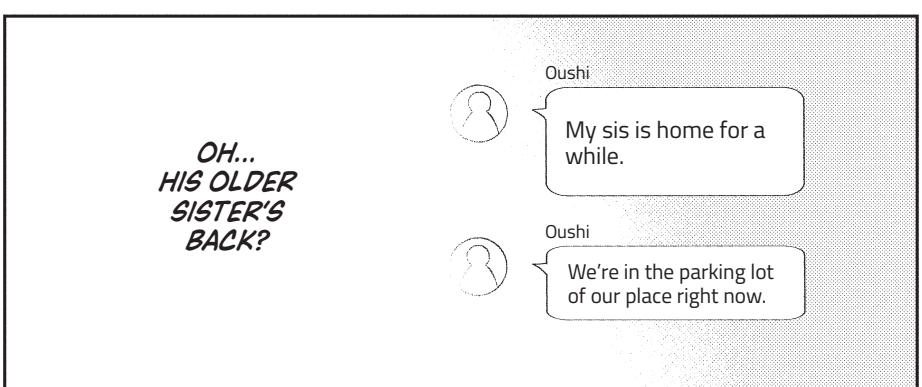

Itsuomi
Headed to Cambodia first
Take care!

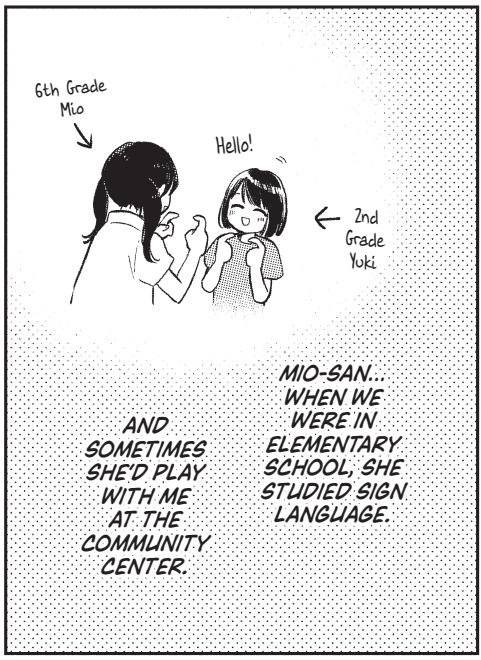

MAYBE I CAN ASK HIM WHEN HE GETS BACK.
I WONDER IF ITSUOMI-SAN'S ENJOYING HIS TRIP.
JUST WHY DOES HE GO ABROAD SO MUCH...?

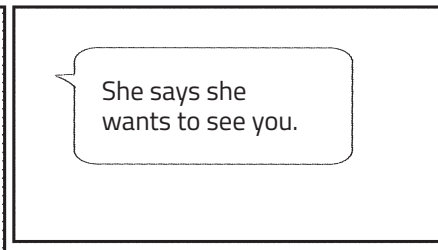

Oushi
Whatcha up to? Home now?
IT'S OUSHI-KUN.

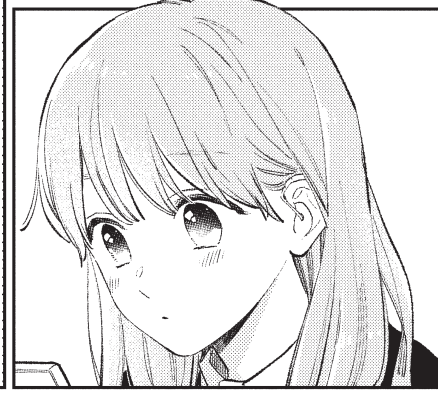


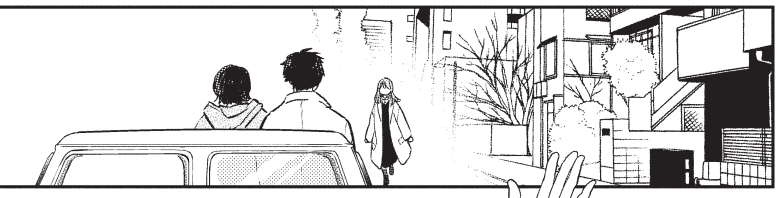

OR DO WE NEED A LITTLE LONGER?
DOES HE KNOW ME WELL ENOUGH?
Get to know me a little more and I'll tell you


OH... HIS OLDER SISTER'S BACK?
Oushi
My sis is home for a while.
Oushi
We're in the parking lot of our place right now.


6th Grade Mio
Hello!
2nd Grade Yuki
MIO-SAN... WHEN WE WERE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SHE STUDIED SIGN LANGUAGE.
AND SOMETIMES SHE'D PLAY WITH ME AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER.


She says she wants to see you.

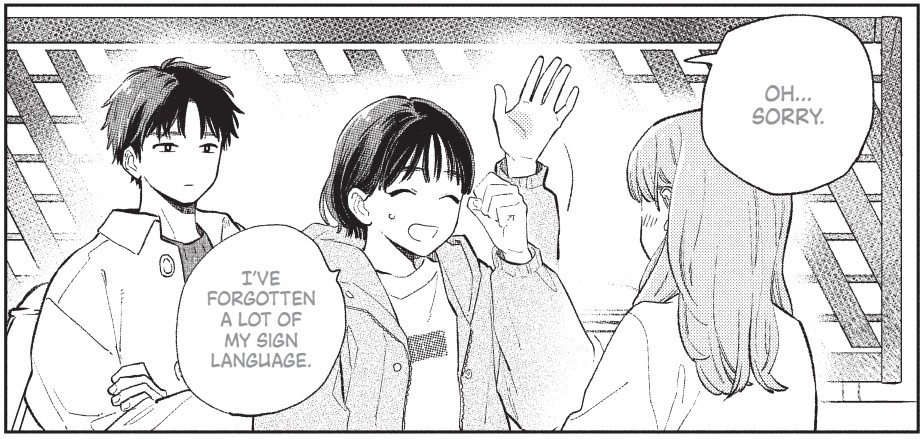





YUKI-CHAAAAN! ♡
HEEEY! ♡

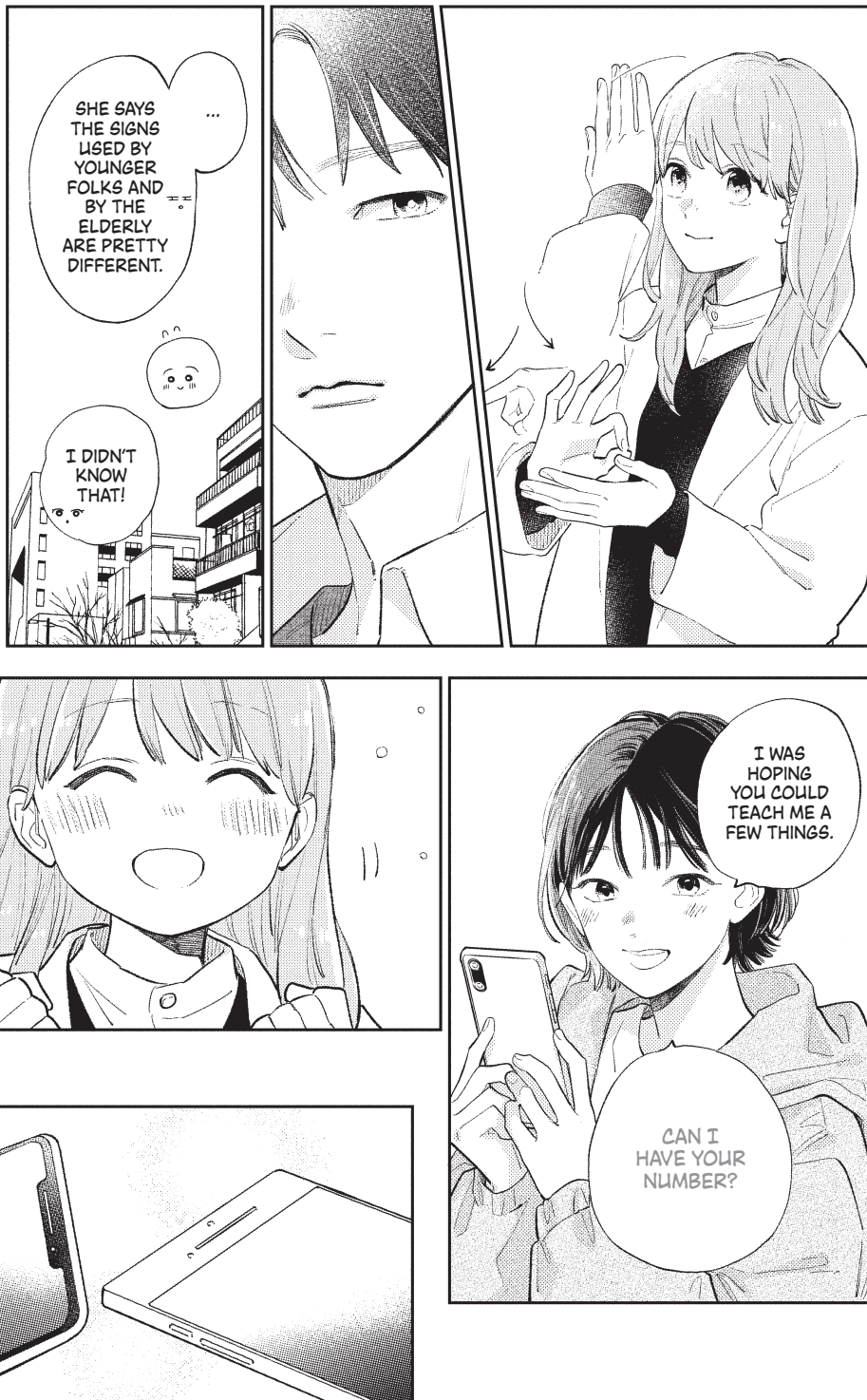

EEEE! YOU'VE GROWN INTO SUCH A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN!
YOUR HAIR COLOR IS SO CUTE!
MIO, USE SIGN LANGUAGE.

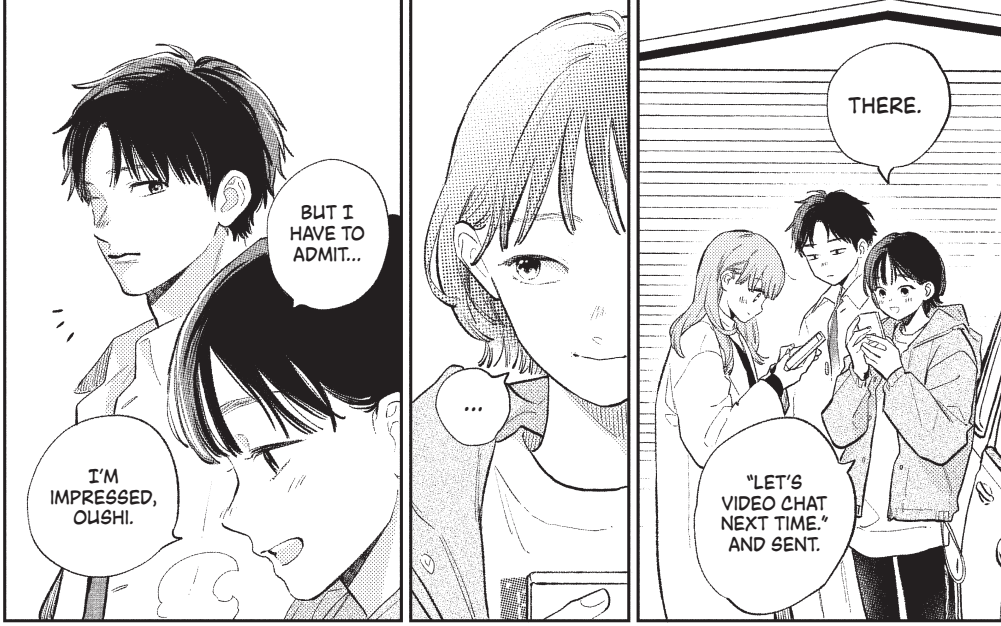

IT'S BEEN SO LONG!


OH... SORRY.
I'VE FORGOTTEN A LOT OF MY SIGN LANGUAGE.

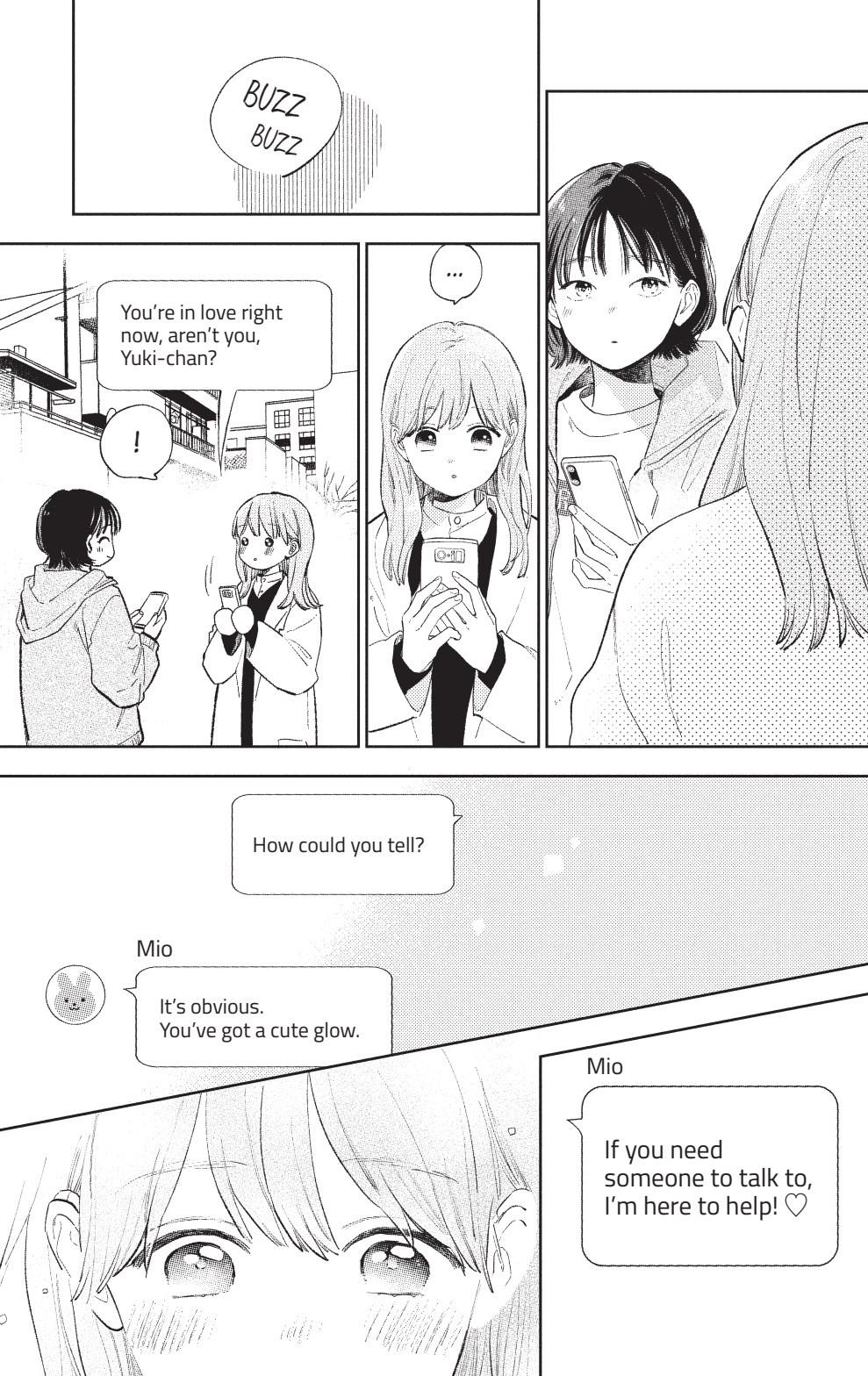

I REALLY NEED TO BRUSH UP ON MY SIGN LANGUAGE, TOO!
FLAP
ぱ°
ぱ°
FLAP
ぱ°
FLAP
SO I WONDERED HOW YOU WERE DOING, YUKI-CHAN.
SO, I'M WORKING AT THIS NURSING FACILITY.
AND RECENTLY, A DEAF PERSON MOVED IN!


DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK!
...
INTER-PRET FOR ME, OUSHI.
COME ON.


SHE SAYS THE SIGNS USED BY YOUNGER FOLKS AND BY THE ELDERLY ARE PRETTY DIFFERENT.
...
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!
I WAS HOPING YOU COULD TEACH ME A FEW THINGS.
CAN I HAVE YOUR NUMBER?

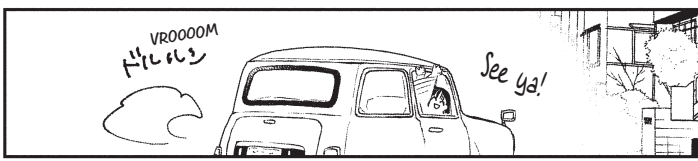

BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT...
I'M IMPRESSED, OUSHI.
...
THERE.
"LET'S VIDEO CHAT NEXT TIME." AND SENT.


AREN'T YOU GOING TO INTERPRET FOR ME?
I take it you won't.
HUH?
YOU KEPT UP YOUR SIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES.


BUZZ
BUZZ
You're in love right now, aren't you, Yuki-chan?
!
...
How could you tell?
Mio
It's obvious.
You've got a cute glow.
Mio
If you need someone to talk to, I'm here to help! ♡


WELL, DON'T GIVE UP, LITTLE BROTHER.
KNOCK IT OFF WITH THAT.
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
SORRY. PLAYIN' IT COOL FOR NOW, HUH?


YOU GUYS GO TO THE SAME COLLEGE, RIGHT? FEEL FREE TO PUT THIS GUY TO WORK.
...
'KAY?
HELLO! INTERPRET!

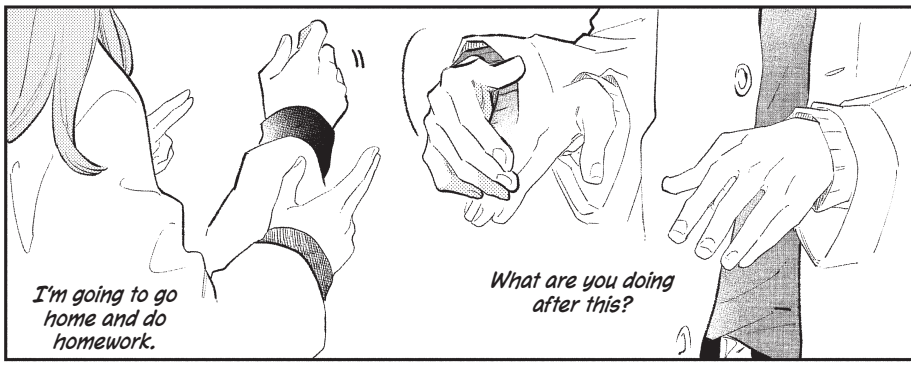

VROOOOM
ブルルン
See ya!

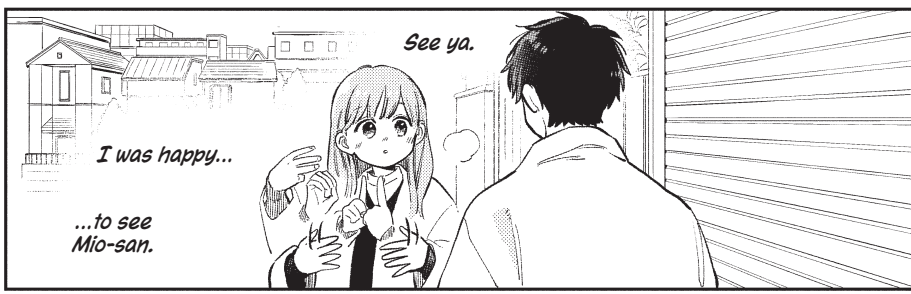

Mio-san sure is beautiful.
I was so nervous.
YEAH?




Oushi-kun.
Have you really been keeping up...
...your sign language studies?
Well, anyway.
Teach her what you can, would ya?
I'm counting on you.
You got it.
It's because I'm interested in becoming a sign language interpreter.
Oh! That's great!
It's mostly women who have an interest in sign language.
...
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.
Pretty impressive, eh?
...
What is it?


WHAT ELSE...
...D'YOU LIKE ABOUT ME?
...?

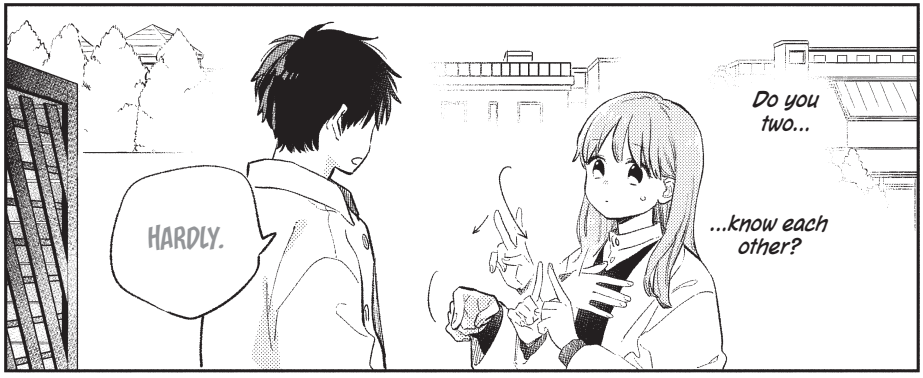

I'm going to go home and do homework.
What are you doing after this?


See ya.
I was happy...
...to see Mio-san.


...been seeing...
...that guy lately?
Have you...


Wait a second...
Just tell me if you're seeing him.
...


...
WHAT GUY?
You mean Itsuomi-san?

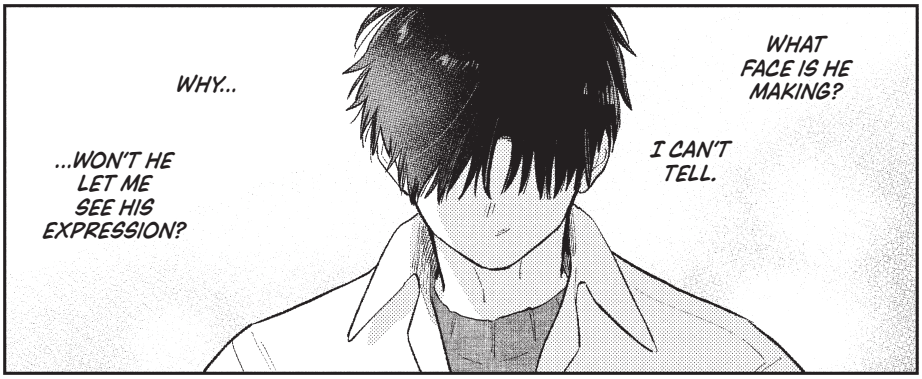

HARDLY.
Do you two...
...know each other?



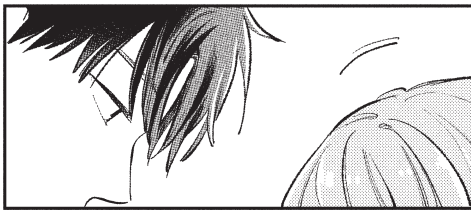



Are you...
...sleeping over at his house?




WHY...
...WON'T HE LET ME SEE HIS EXPRESSION?
WHAT FACE IS HE MAKING?
I CAN'T TELL.


Why...
...are you signing with your face down?

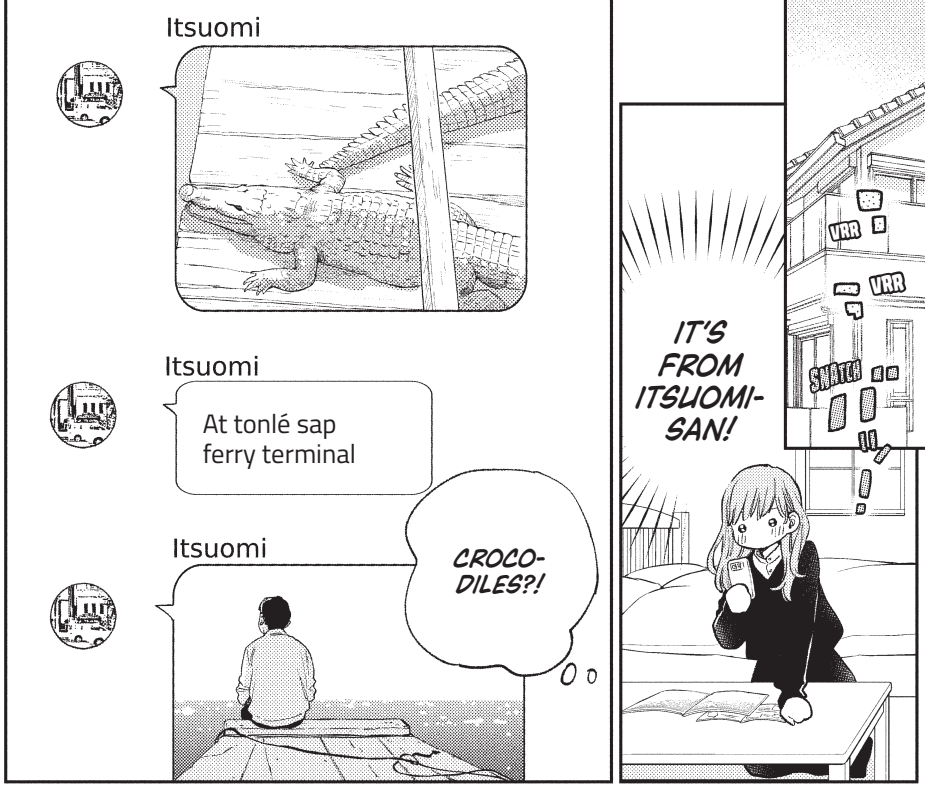


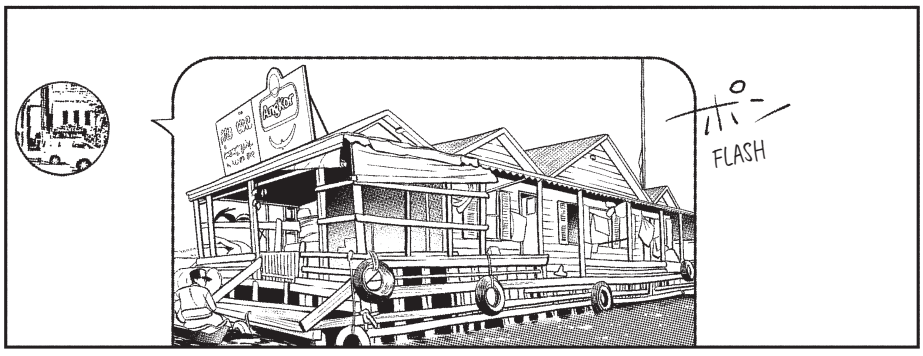

WHOA.
What is it?

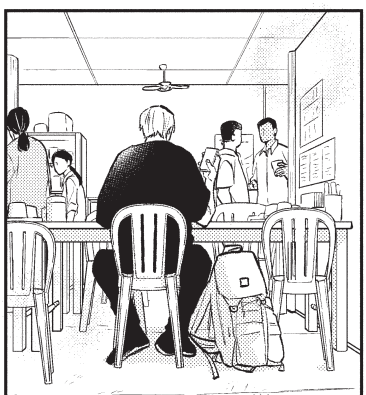

I haven't slept over.
OKAY.
It was an accident.
Anyway, are you?
You're deaf, and that might...
I wouldn't like that.
...attract the attention of a weird guy.
I'm just going to put it out there.
Don't go getting the wrong idea.


I mean, even I want a cute girlfriend.
I've had girlfriends before, you know.
...
PAH PAH
Just speaking as...
...an old friend.
Yeah. I'll have one in no time.
Right...
Good luck getting a girlfriend.


HE OUGHT TO KNOW I DIDN'T MISUNDER-STAND.
OUSHI-KUN...
WHSH
WHSH
WHEN HE THINKS HIS COMPASSION TOWARD ME... NO, TOWARD DEAF PEOPLE... IS GETTING MISCONSTRUED, IT DRIVES HIM CRAZY.
HE'S TOLD ME BEFORE.
AND HE'LL PROBABLY KEEP SAYING IT.
HE SHOULD STOP WASTING TIME DENYING IT.

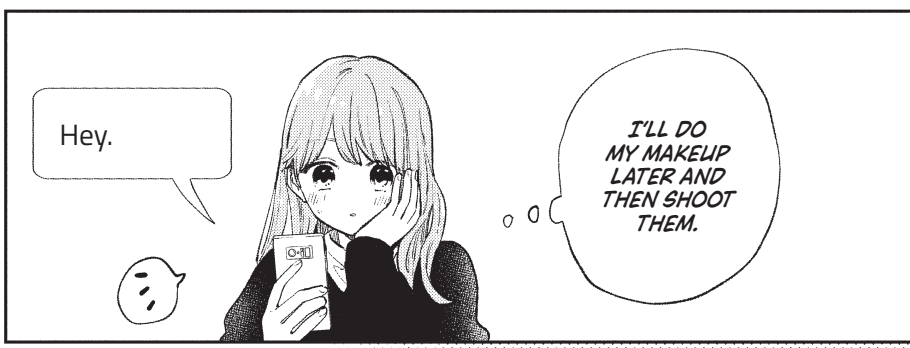

Itsuomi
Itsuomi
At tonlé sap ferry terminal
Itsuomi
CROCO-DILES?!
VRR
VRR
SNATCH
IT'S FROM ITSUOMI-SAN!


FLASH




They have shops and schools on the water
ON THE WATER! WOW...



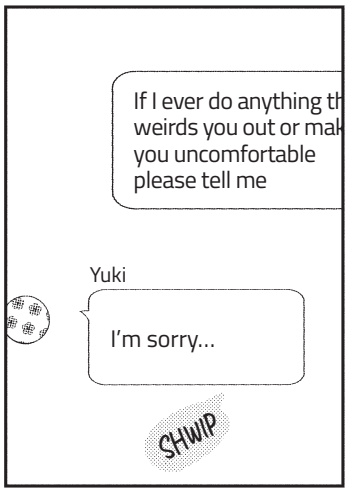


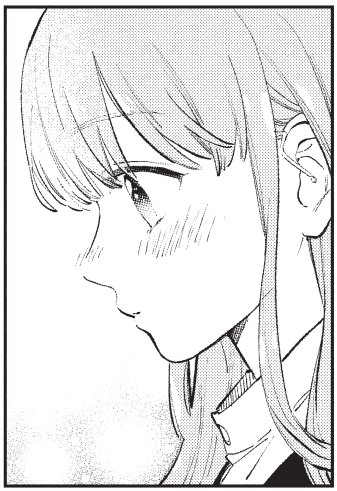
EVEN IF THINGS WERE HECTIC...

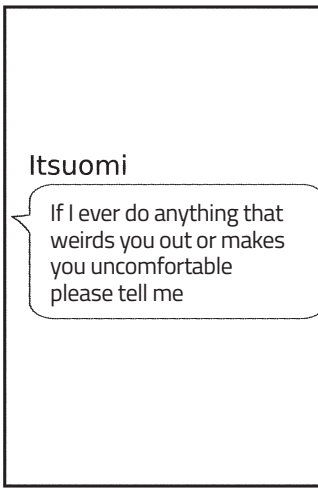
Sorry things were hectic before I left but well

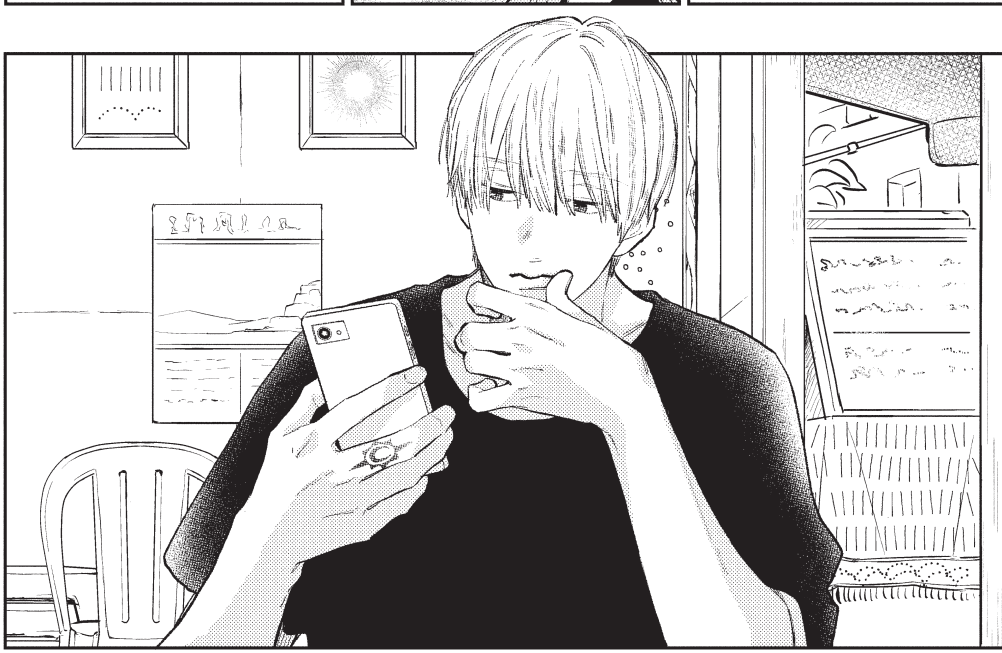
...I'M GLAD THAT WE WERE ABLE TO BECOME A COUPLE.

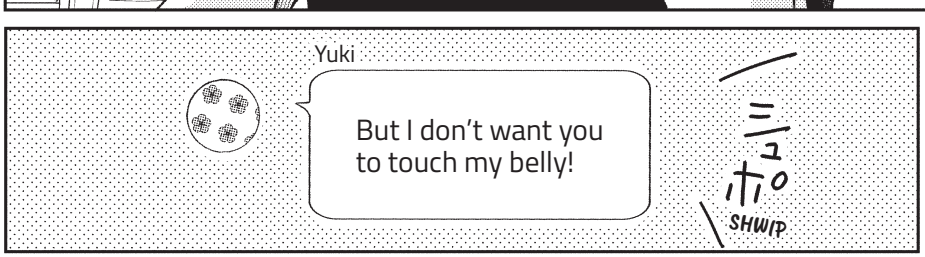
I'm looking forward to our future

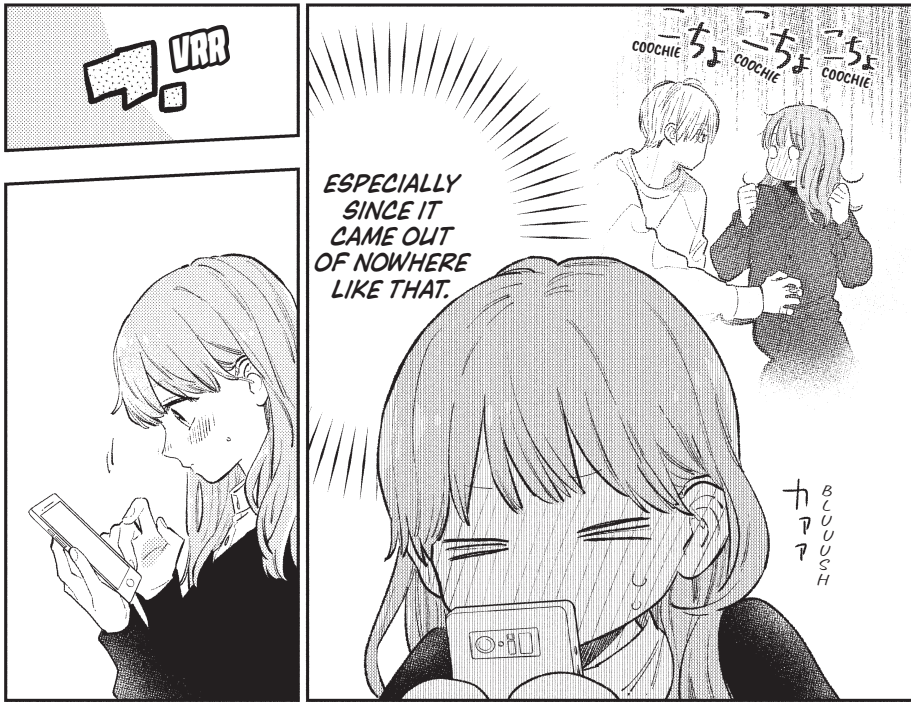

If I ever do anything th
weirds you out or mak
you uncomfortable
please tell me
Yuki
I'm sorry...
SHWIP




Itsuomi
If I ever do anything that
weirds you out or makes
you uncomfortable
please tell me




Yuki
But I don't want you
to touch my belly!
SHWIP





Itsuomi

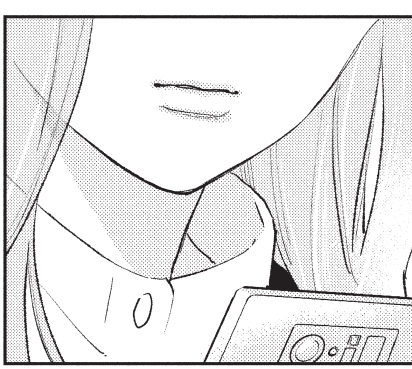
You got it

Itsuomi

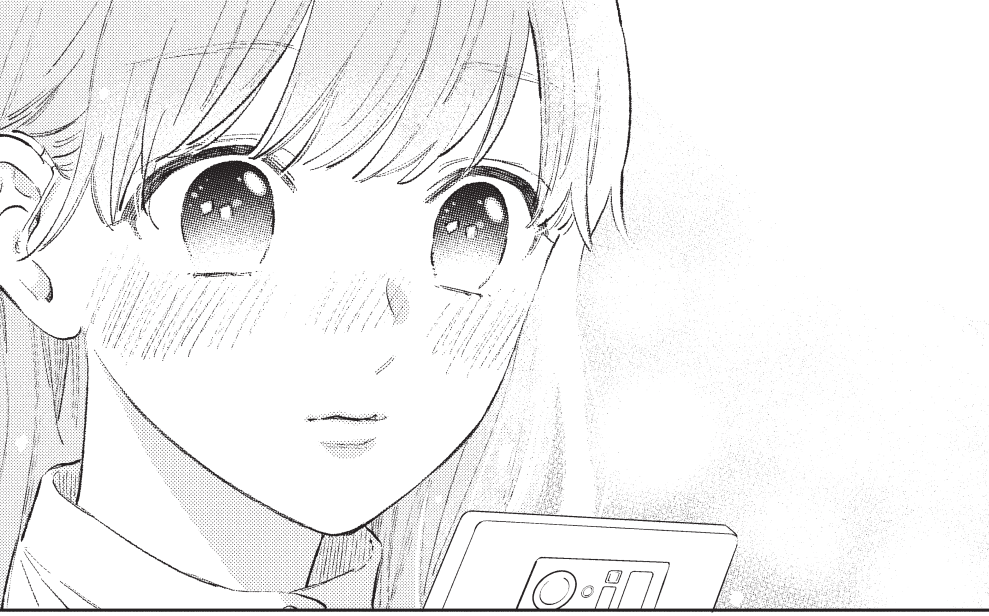
So everywhere else is ok?

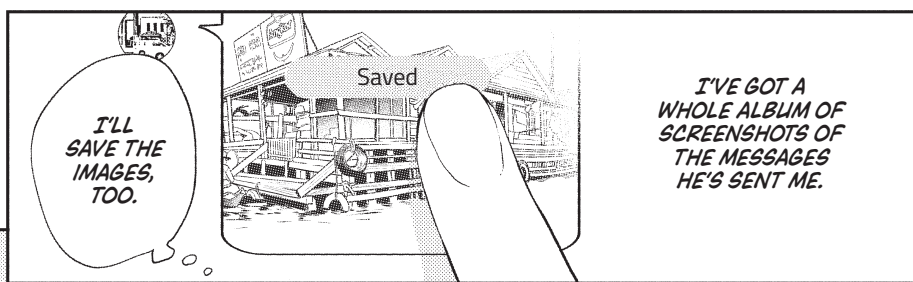


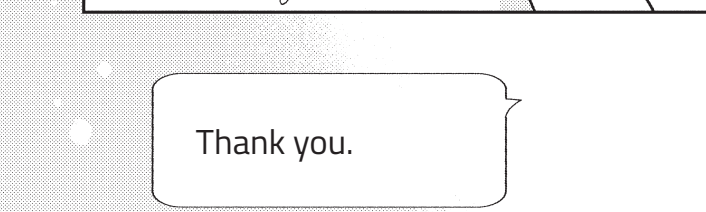


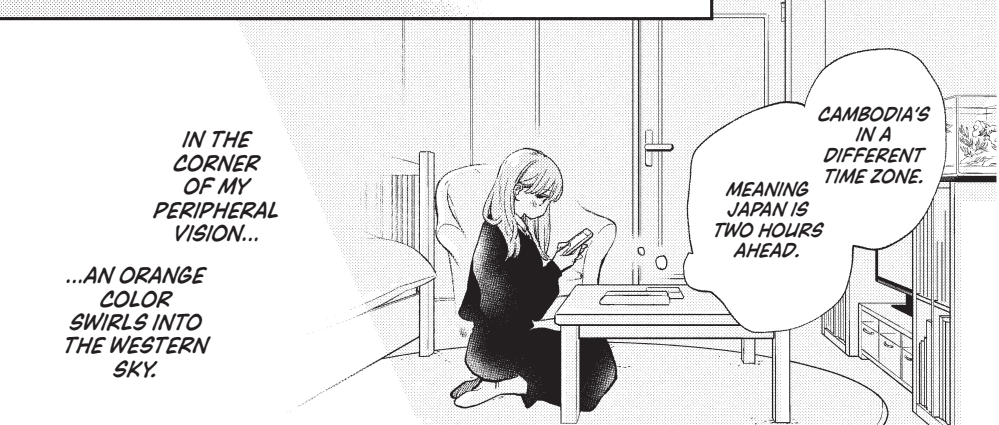


I'll be careful




I'LL SAVE THE IMAGES, TOO.
Saved
I'VE GOT A WHOLE ALBUM OF SCREENSHOTS OF THE MESSAGES HE'S SENT ME.


Thank you.


IN THE CORNER OF MY PERIPHERAL VISION...
...AN ORANGE COLOR SWIRLS INTO THE WESTERN SKY.
CAMBODIA'S IN A DIFFERENT TIME ZONE.
MEANING JAPAN IS TWO HOURS AHEAD.

Itsuomi

When I get back

Itsuomi

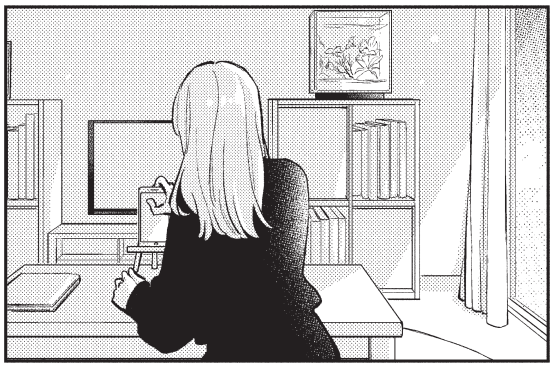
I'll make time for the two of us

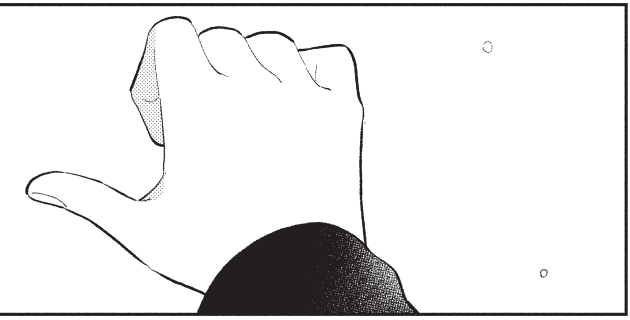


I'll spoil you rotten

HOW DID YOUR HORIZON...

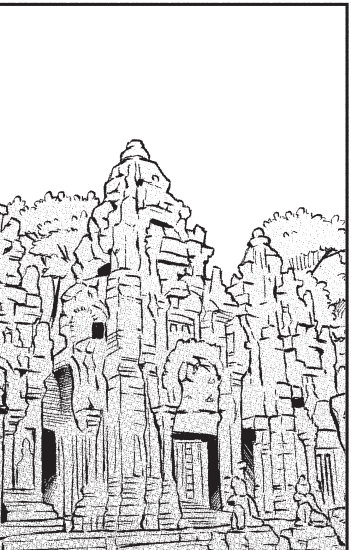
...GET SO BROAD?



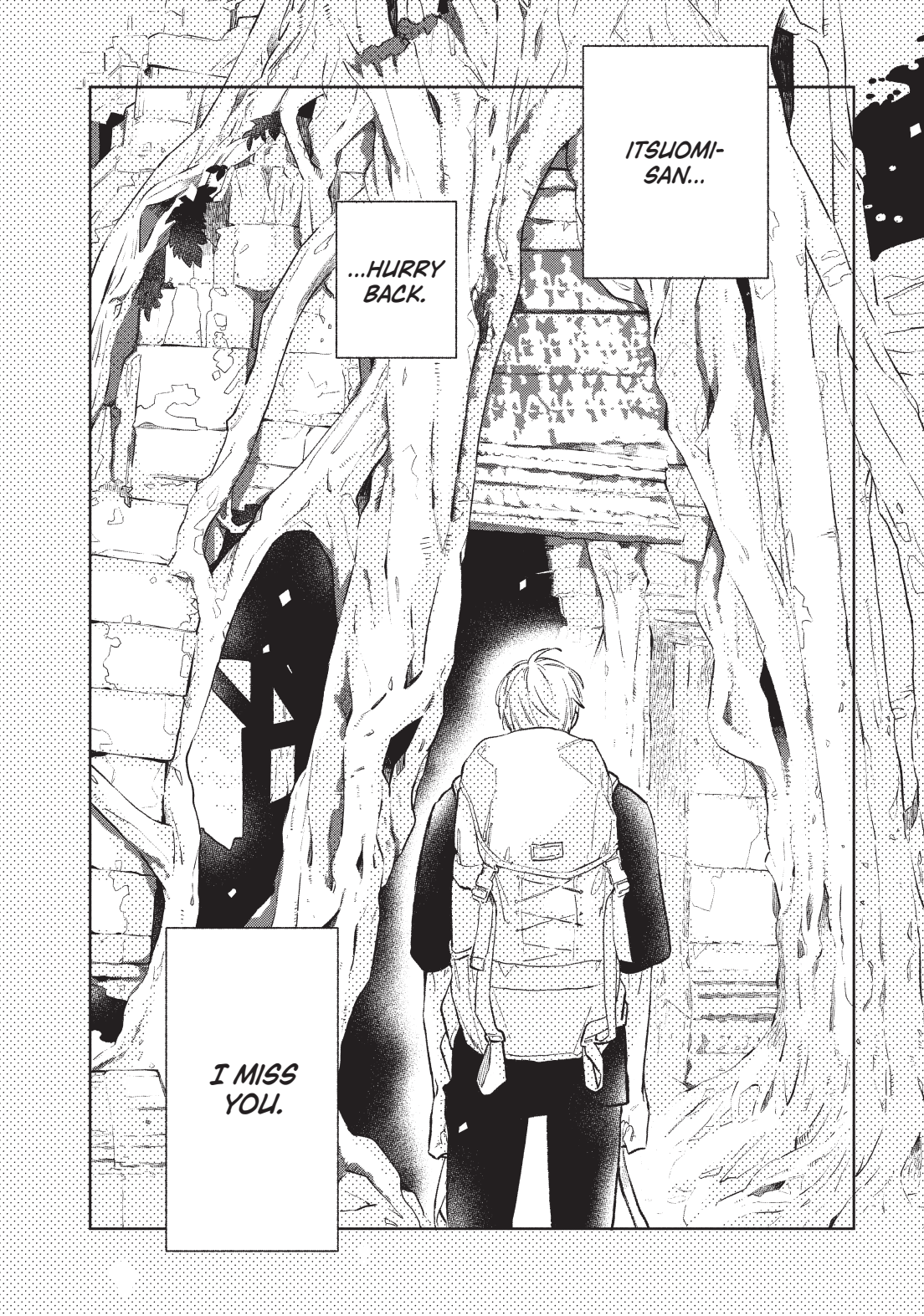


I WONDER IF THE COLOR WASHING OVER ME...

...WILL SOON BE WASHING OVER YOU, TOO.






ITSUOMI-SAN...
...HURRY BACK.
I MISS YOU.



Sign.12

Homecoming



Itsuomi

They're having a festival in Thailand right now called Magha Puja
They hold it on the full moon around this time every year

NO MATTER HOW MANY DAYS PASSED...

...WITHOUT HEARING FROM ITSUOMI-SAN...



...HE ALWAYS WROTE TO ME TO MAKE UP FOR ALL THE LOST TIME.

Morning alms in
Chiang Mai
Giving food to the monks

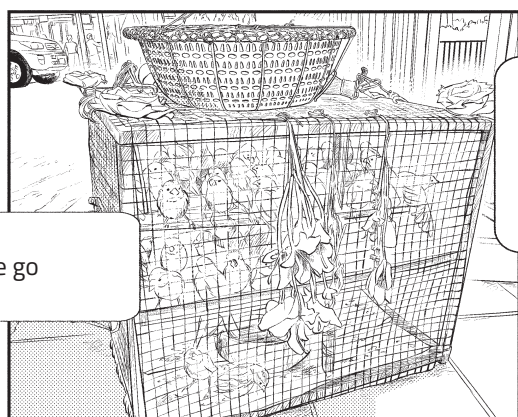


Arrived in Myanmar
Eating mohinga



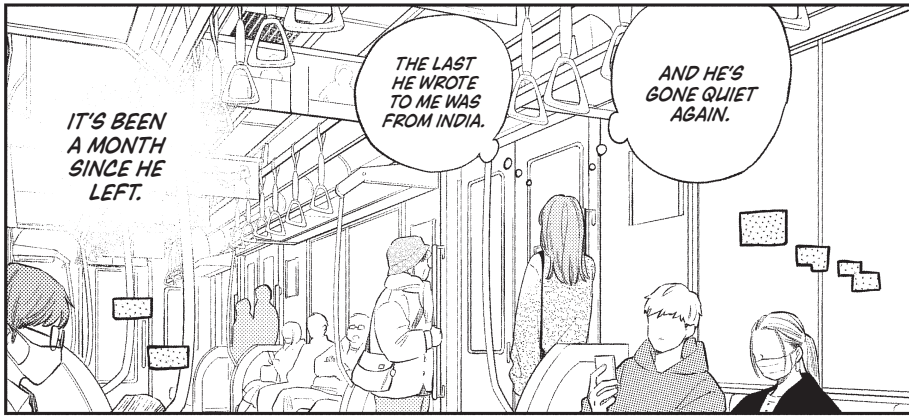


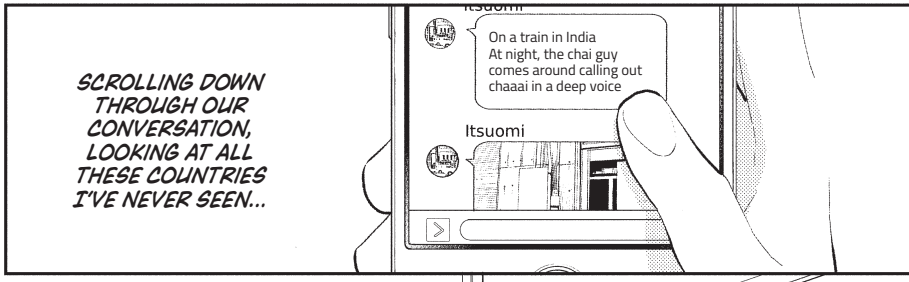
Having a beer with some
Burmese guys I met



They were selling little
birds
Some people buy
them and release them
to get karma

I let some go


IT'S BEEN A MONTH SINCE HE LEFT.
THE LAST HE WROTE TO ME WAS FROM INDIA.
AND HE'S GONE QUIET AGAIN.


SCROLLING DOWN THROUGH OUR CONVERSATION, LOOKING AT ALL THESE COUNTRIES I'VE NEVER SEEN...
On a train in India
At night, the chai guy comes around calling out chaaai in a deep voice
Itsuomi

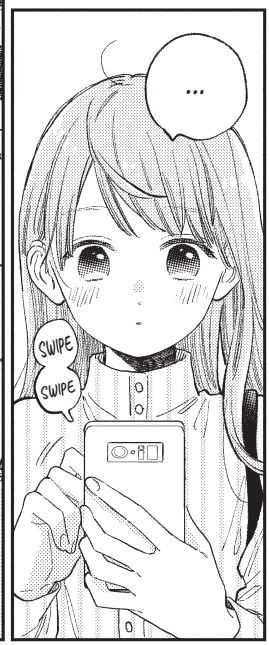

I WONDER IF HE'S WATCHED THEM.
I SENT HIM SIGN LANGUAGE VIDEOS.

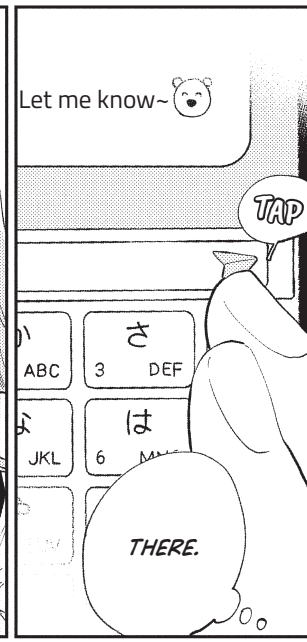

...AND THEN WATCHING THIS FAMILIAR CITY SPEEDING PAST ON THE TRAIN...
...I MARVEL AT HOW THE TWO OF US CAN BE GOING OUT.


IF I WANT TO BE ABLE TO TRAVEL WITH HIM...
PART-TIME MOTTO
☆Data Entry
Transportation costs covered
No dress code || Temporary positions OK
A WORKPLACE THAT FEELS LIKE HOME!
Location:
10 min walk from the station
3 min ride by bus
Commuting via bike/motorcycle OK
プシュー
PSSSHHH...
HERE GOES.
...I NEED TO GET MYSELF A JOB QUICK.
ガッ！
ZSH
OH... I'M SORRY. YOU SEE, I HAVE ALLERGIES.
A MASK...
!
Oh gosh oh no
Can we please communicate through writing?

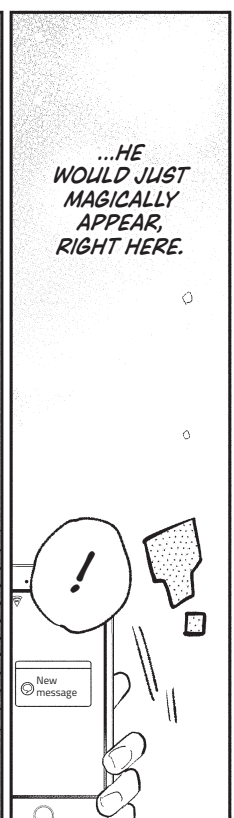

CALL...?
We'll call if you've got the job.
BOW
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE TOLD HER RIGHT THERE AND THEN I CAN'T SPEAK OVER THE PHONE.
I'LL EMAIL THE COMPANY LATER TO LET THEM KNOW.
HOW DO PEOPLE USUALLY MANAGE TO FIND JOBS?
OH.
BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL, MADOKA-CHAN WORKED PART TIME FOR THIS CHAIN.
A friend from Deaf school.
I COULD USE SOME ADVICE. I'LL ASK HER.
I'd love to see her, too.

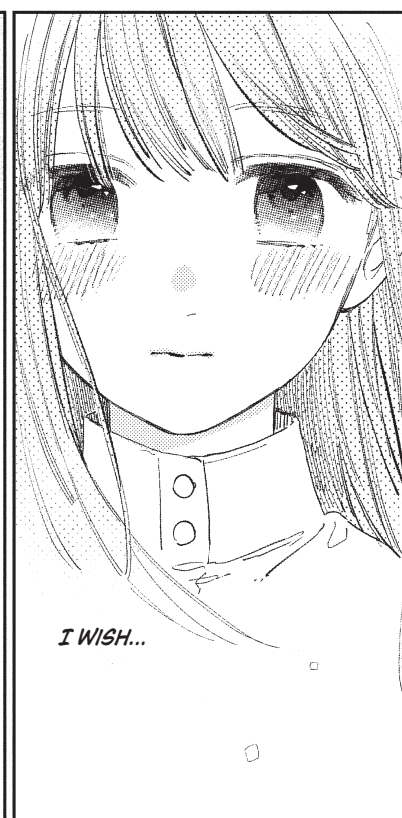



...
SWIPE
SWIPE


Let me know~
TAP
さ
ABC
3
DEF
は
JKL
6
THERE.


Itsuomi
Where you at?
?!


...HE WOULD JUST MAGICALLY APPEAR, RIGHT HERE.
!
New message


I WISH...

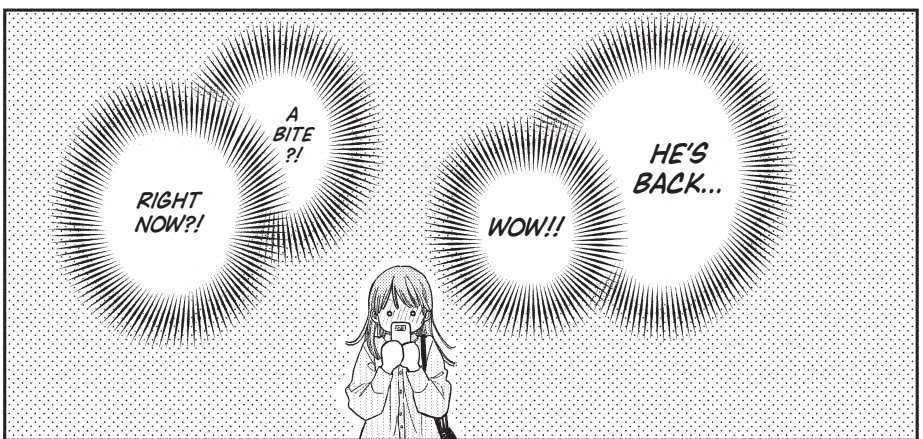
Itsuomi

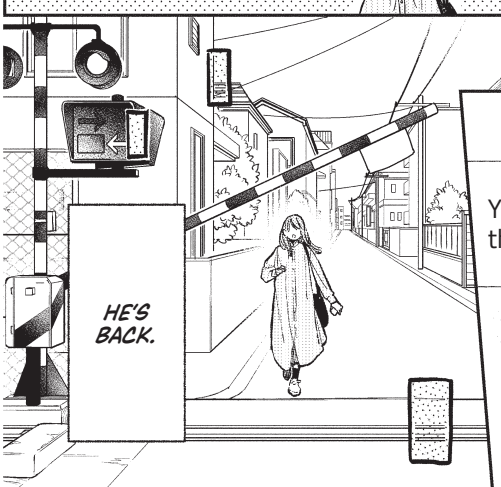
I got back

Itsuomi

Want to grab a bite?



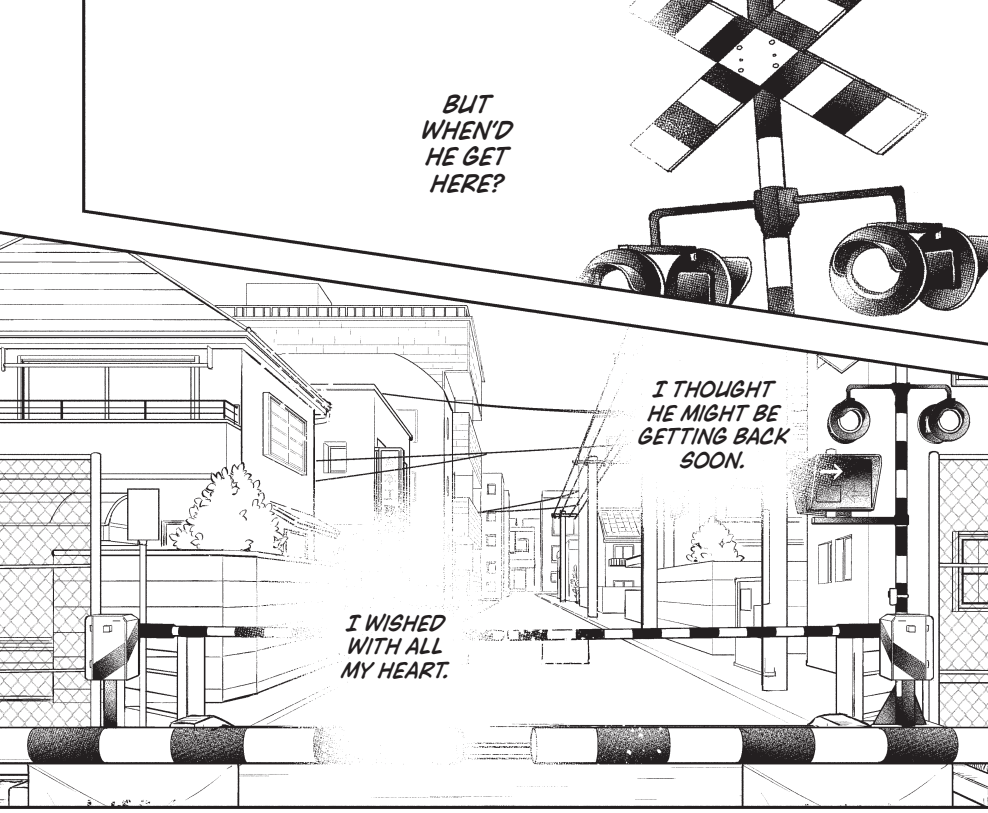


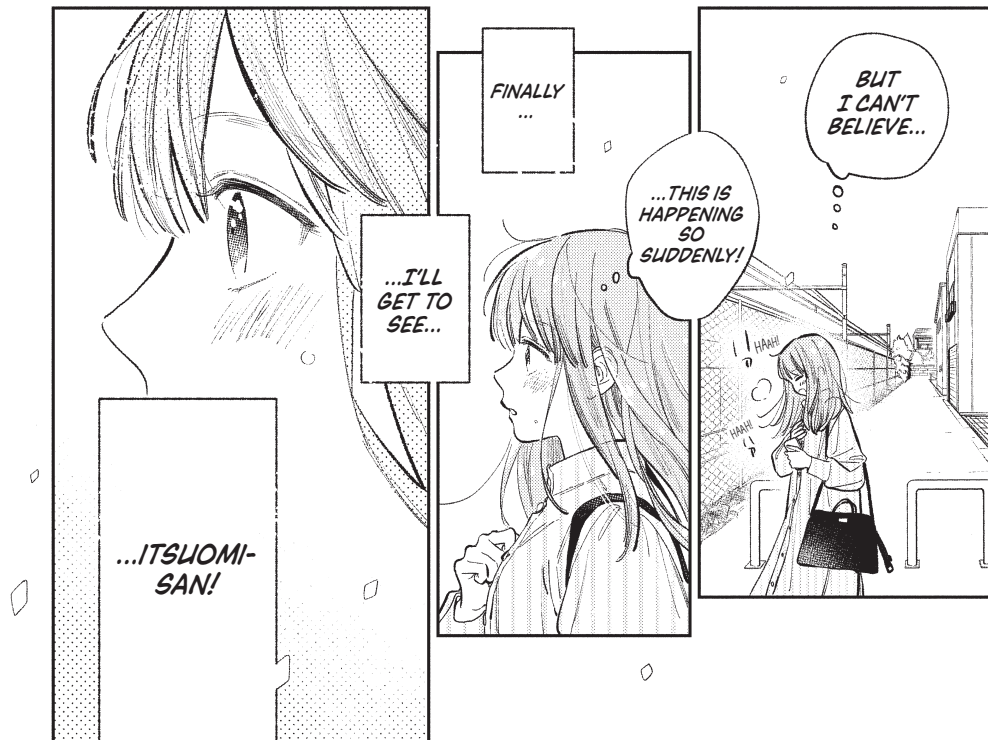


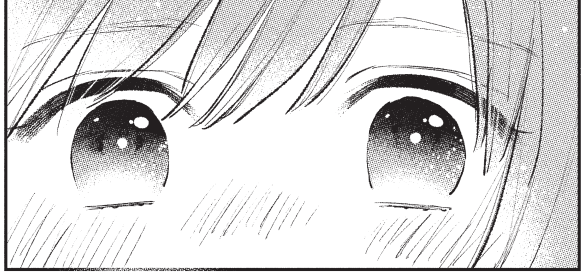
Yeah, that's fine!

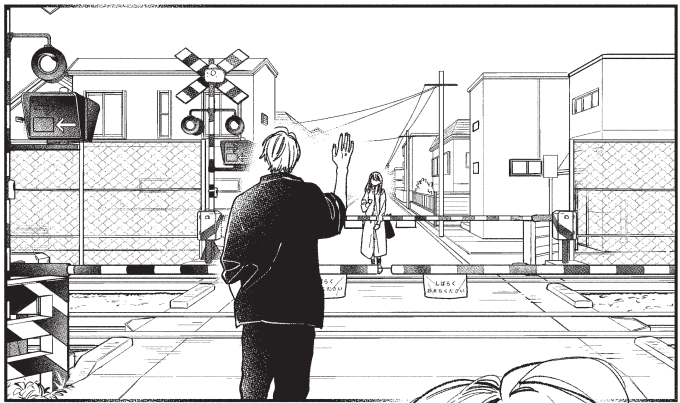
I'm near campus

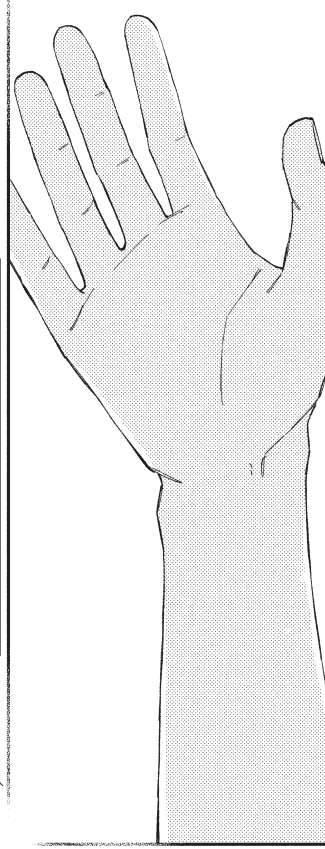
Can I meet you at the station?


BUT WHEN'D HE GET HERE?
I THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE GETTING BACK SOON.
I WISHED WITH ALL MY HEART.

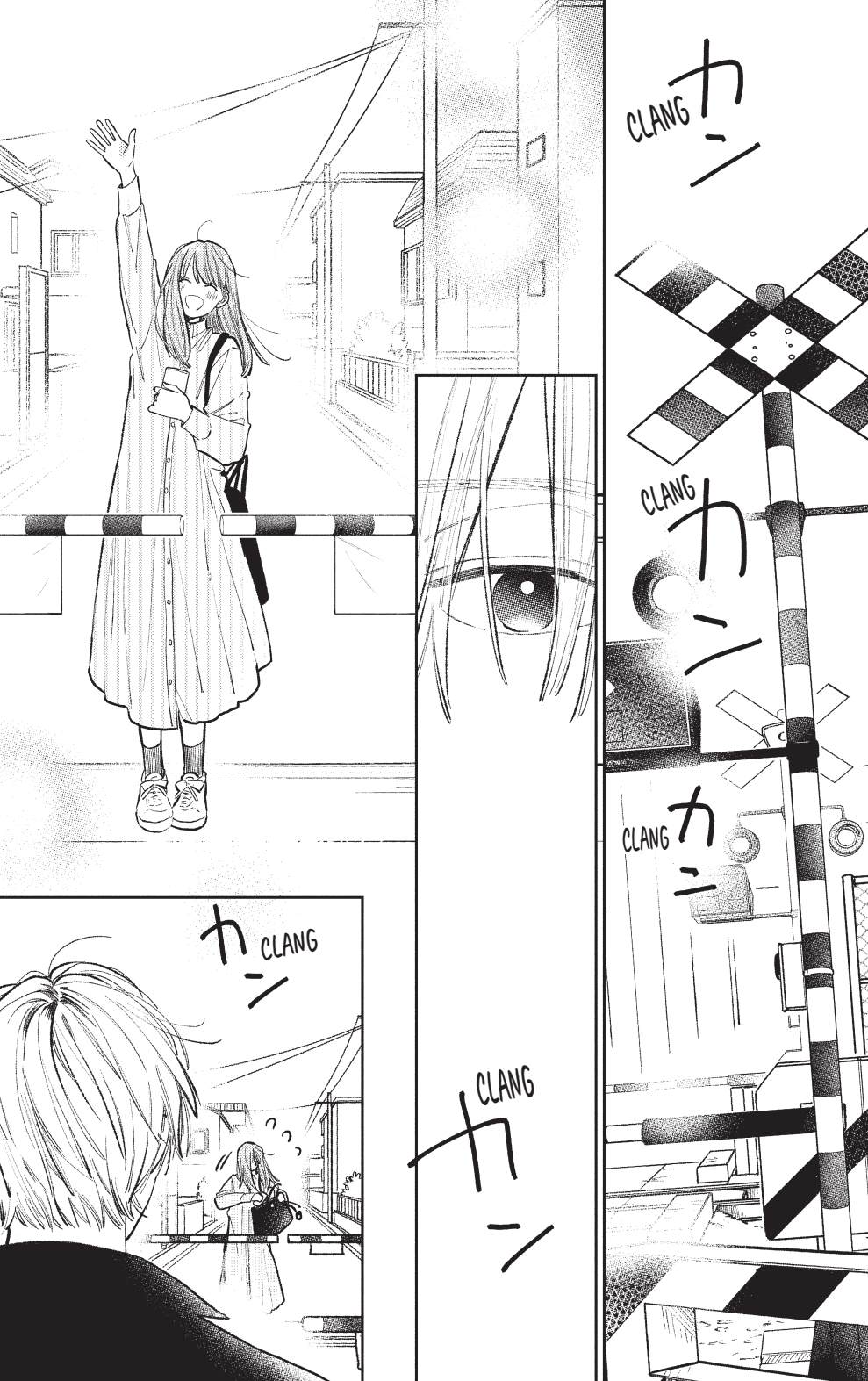

FINALLY ...
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE...
...THIS IS HAPPENING SO SUDDENLY!
...I'LL GET TO SEE...
...ITSUOMI-SAN!
HAAH
HAAH

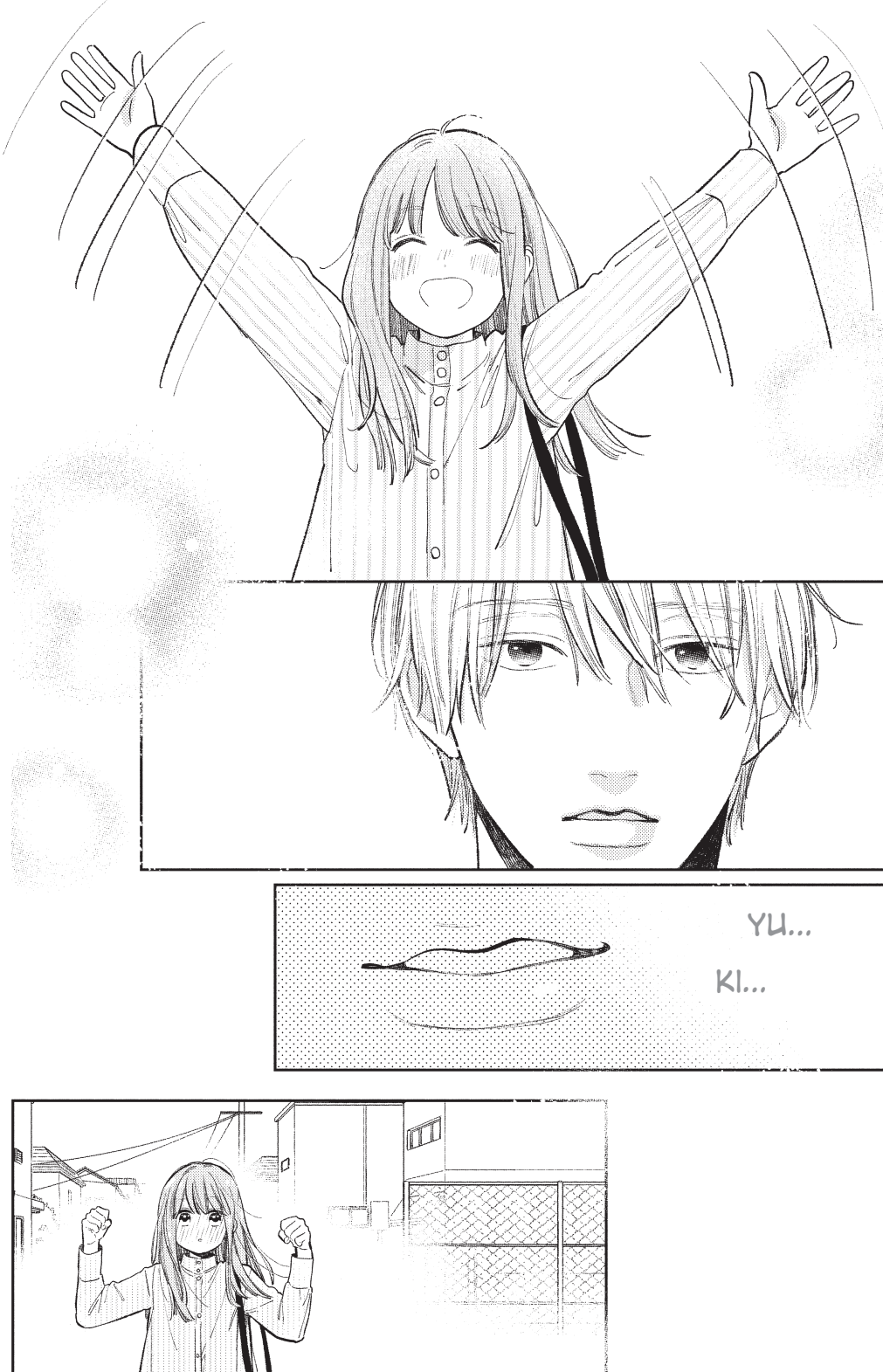




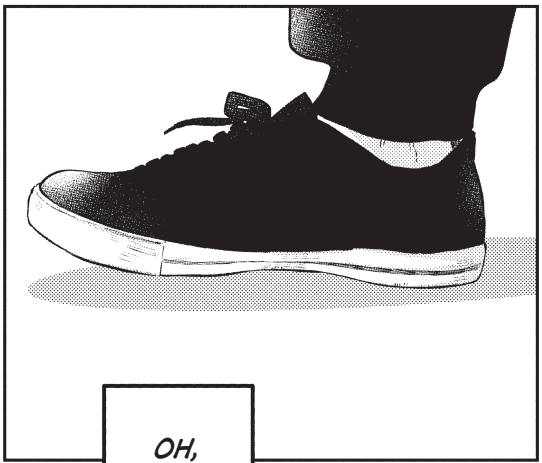


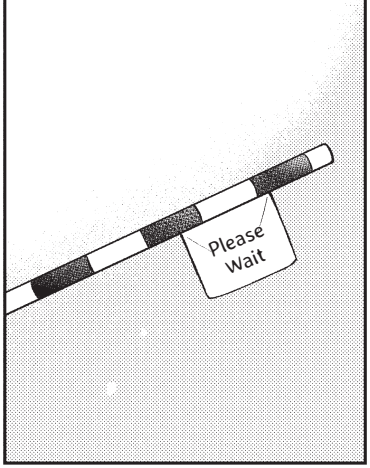


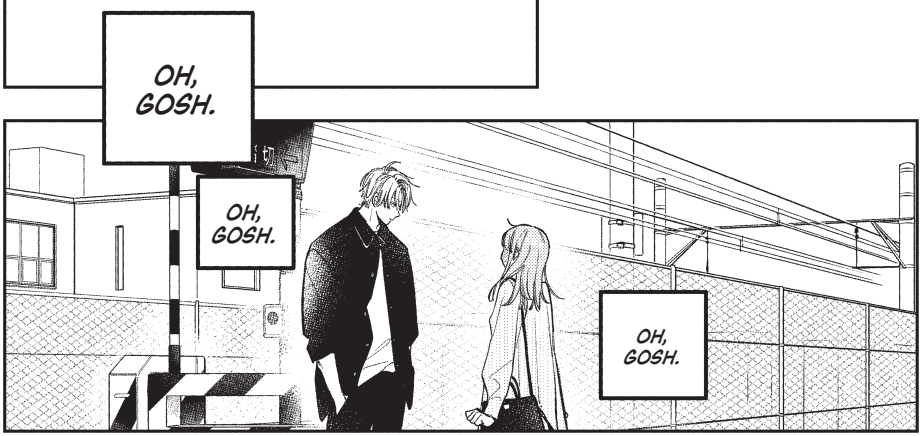

CLANG カン
CLANG カン
CLANG カン
CLANG カン
CLANG カン

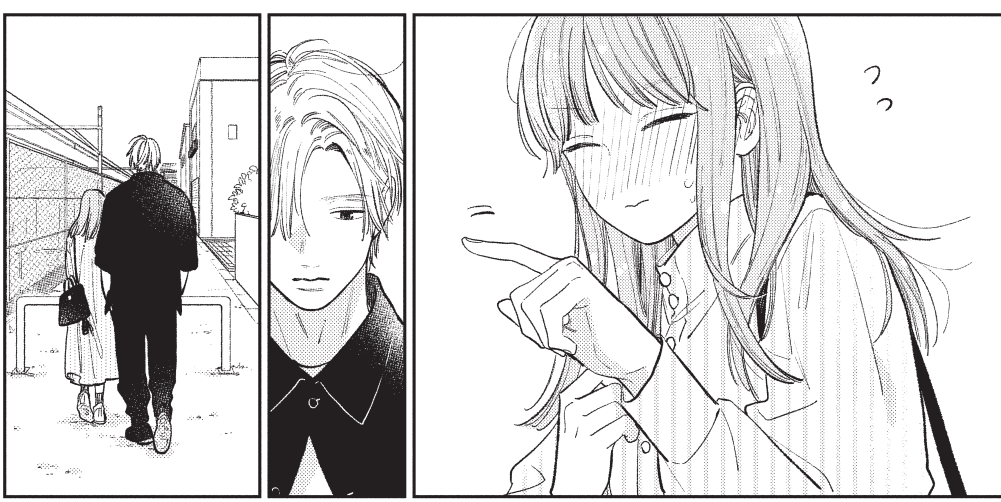

YU...
KI...

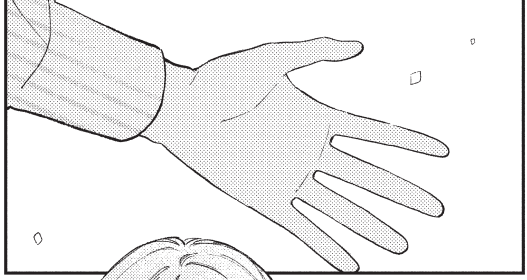

MAN, I MISSED YOU.



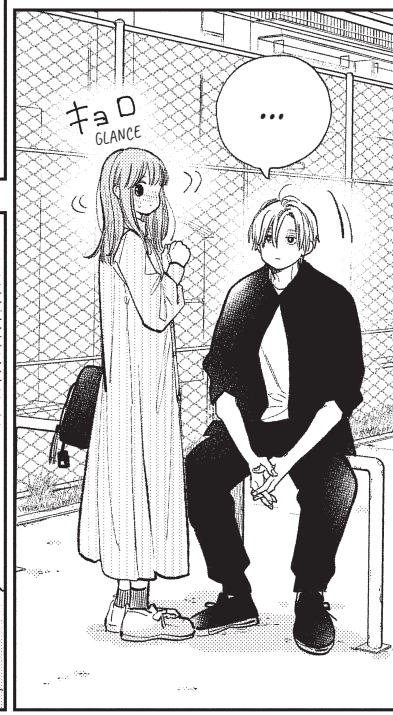

Please Wait


OH, GOSH.
OH, GOSH.
OH, GOSH.

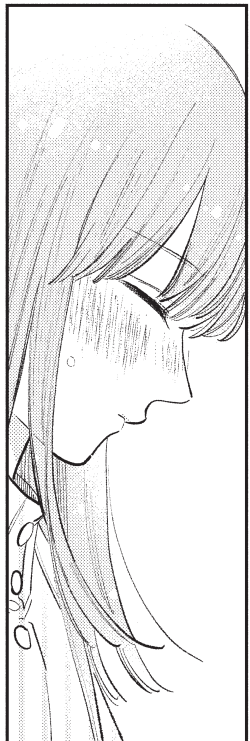


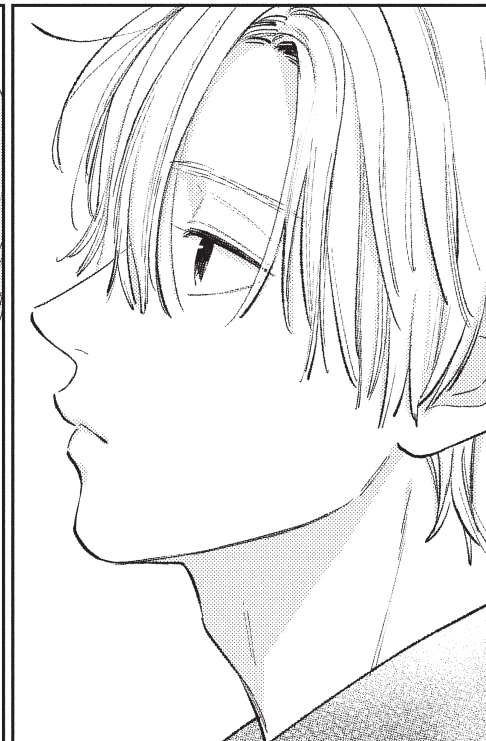


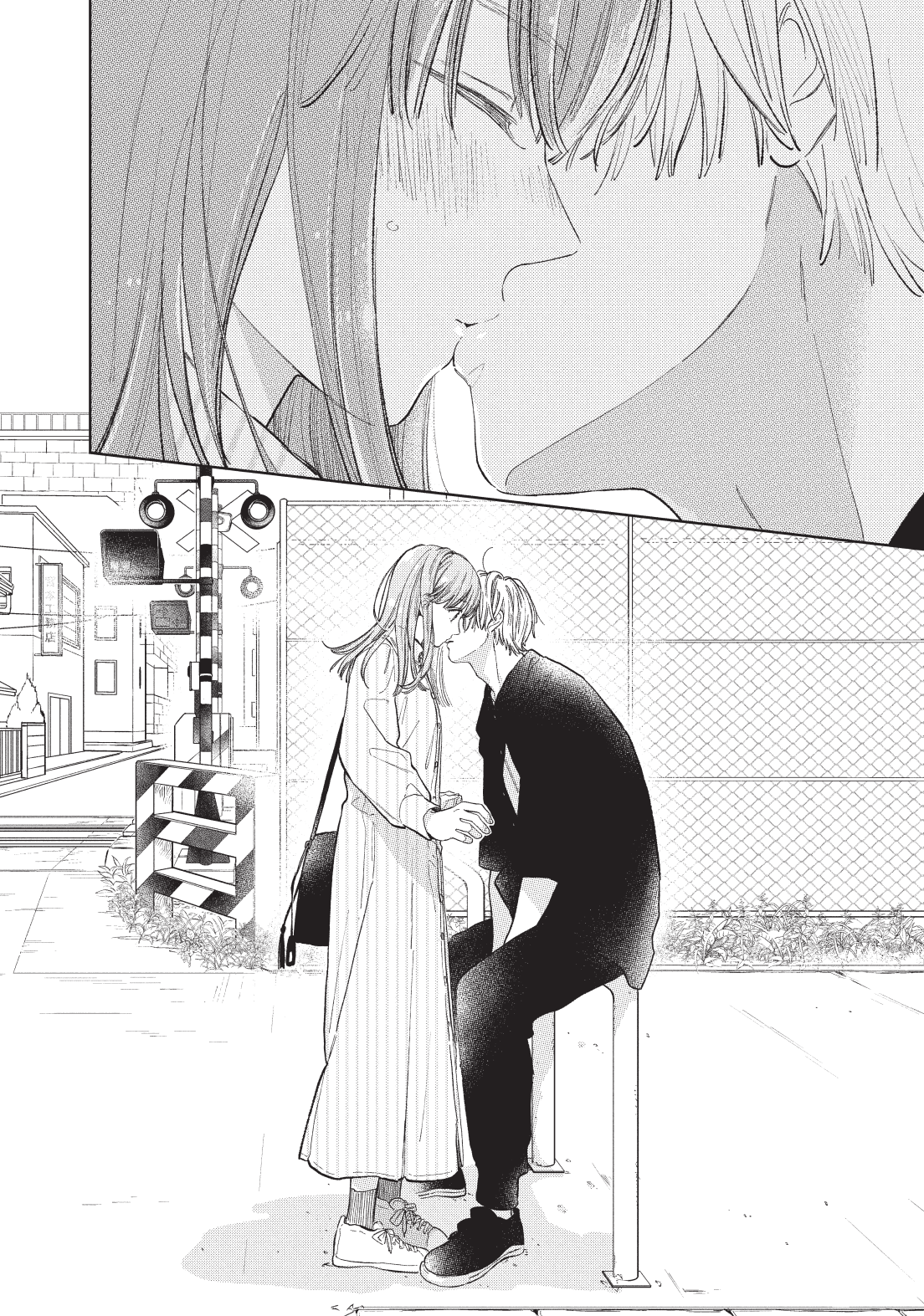


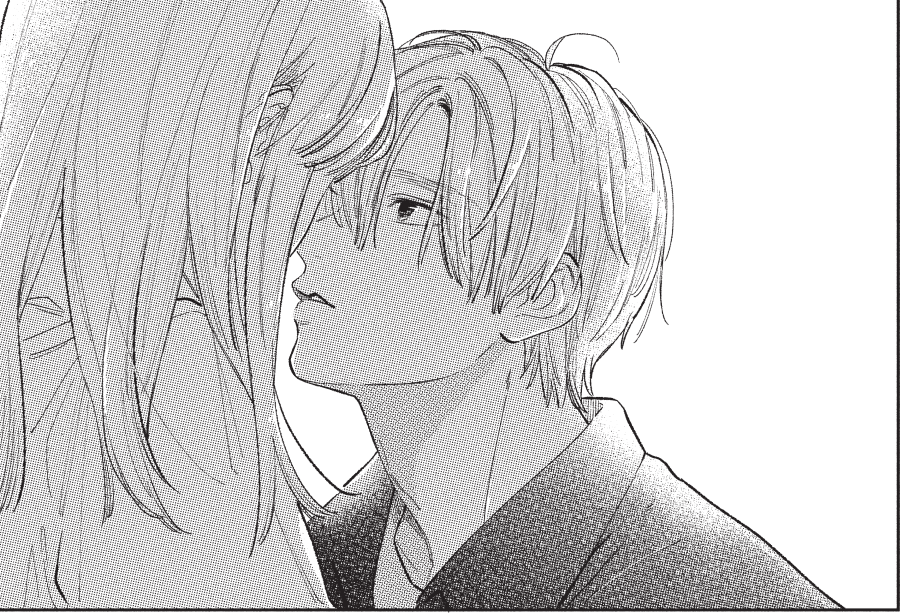

キョロ
GLANCE
…

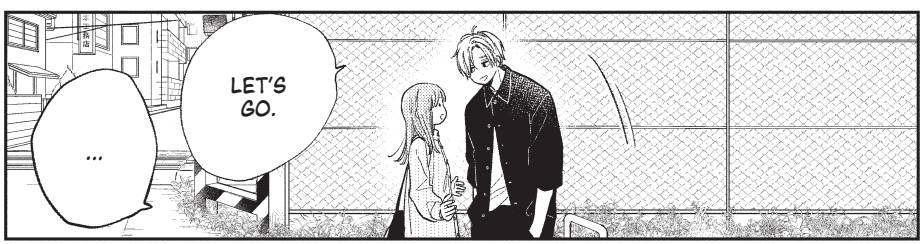


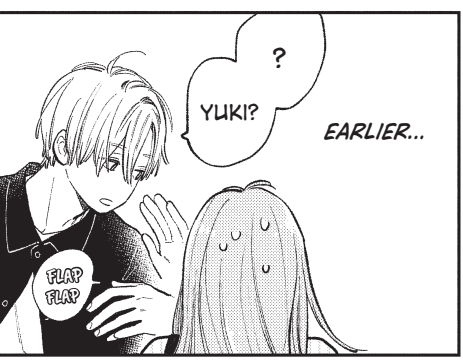




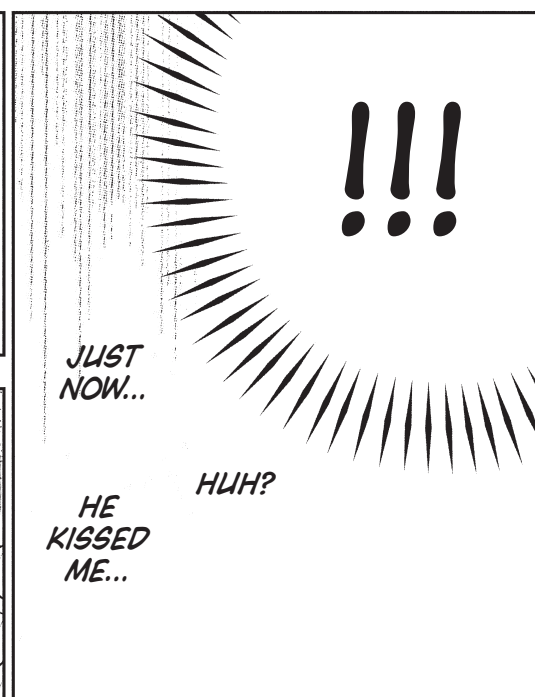





LET'S GO.
...


?
YUKI?
EARLIER...
FLAP FLAP

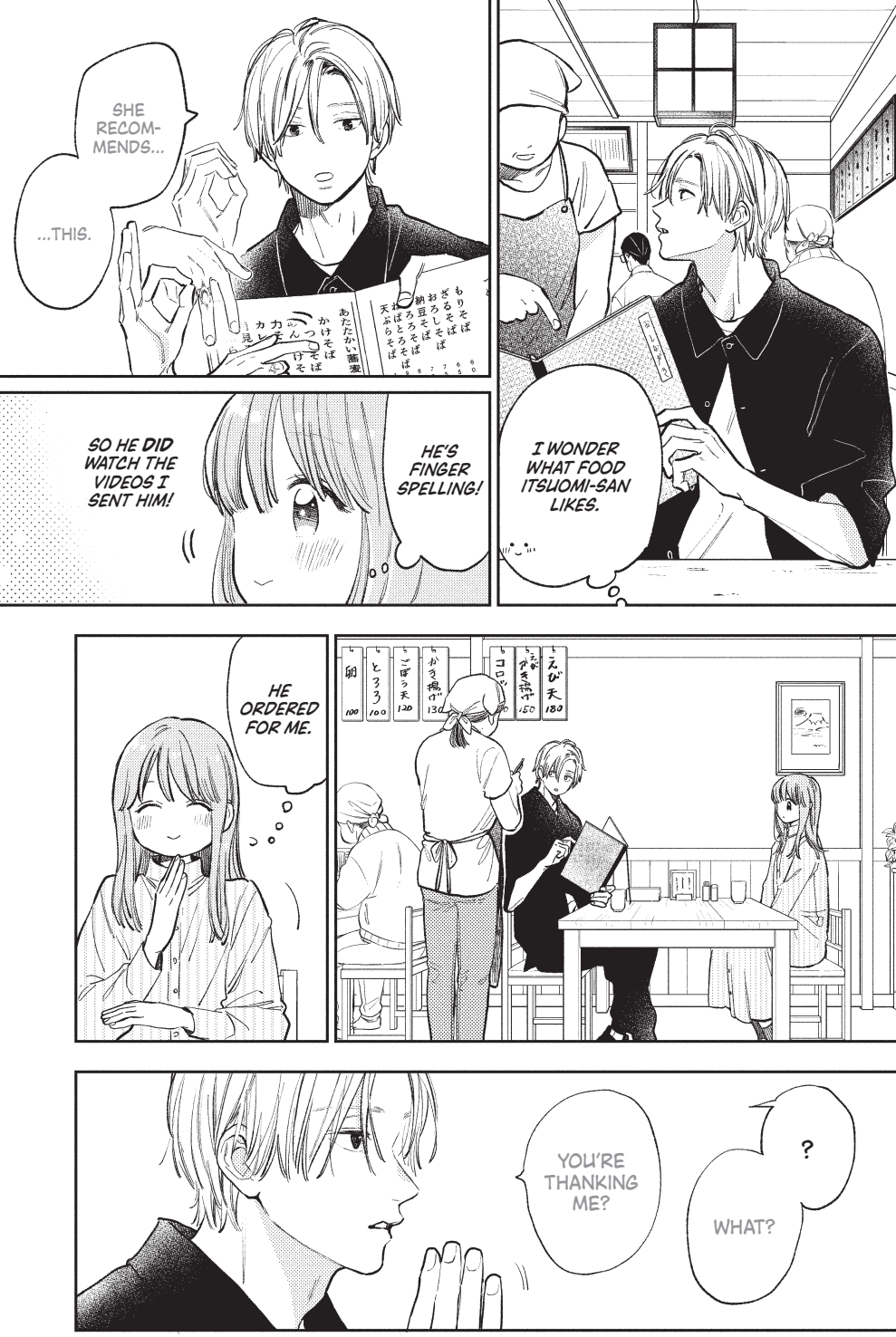

...HE DIDN'T SAY, "MAN, I MISSED YOU."
BLUSH


!!!
JUST NOW...
HUH?
HE KISSED ME...


...IS BRIGHT RED RIGHT NOW.
I'M BURNING UP.
MY FACE...
...HE SAID, "CAN I KISS YOU"!
WHAT...
...DO YOU WANT TO EAT?
I TOTALLY MISREAD HIS LIPS!
THAT WAS MY FIRST EVER...
...KISS...
...AND THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENED!
HE GREW UP ALL OVER.
SO MAYBE THAT WAS JUST HIS WAY OF SAYING HELLO?
HE'S LOOKING AT ME LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED.
FWP
ドキドキ THADUMP
ドキ THADUMP
ドキドキ THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP


HE'S ALWAYS DOING THIS!
How about over there?
IT'S LIKE GETTING HIT BY A BAZOOKA!
MY HEART'S STILL POUNDING.
WHAT DID HE MEAN BY DOING THAT?
How about Japanese food?
Maybe soba noodles?
SURE.
YESTERDAY.
LATE AT NIGHT.
When did you get back?
AND HE'S TANNED.
ISN'T HE COLD WEARING SHORT SLEEVES?
...A LITTLE LONGER.
HIS HAIR'S...
How's your jet lag?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.


ぼっ
BLUSH
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
CALM DOWN!
そば処
光庵
OH. THAT REMINDS ME.
THIS IS OUR FIRST TIME EATING OUT TOGETHER.
HIS SHOULDERS...
...EVEN LOOK LIKE THEY'VE GOTTEN BROADER.


SHE RECOM-MENDS...
...THIS.
もりそば
ざるそば
おろしそば
納豆そば
とろろそば
天ぷらそば
あたたかい蕎麦
かけそば
つけそば
カレー
I WONDER WHAT FOOD ITSUOMI-SAN LIKES.
HE'S FINGER SPELLING!
SO HE DID WATCH THE VIDEOS I SENT HIM!
HE ORDERED FOR ME.
卵 100
とろろ 100
ごぼう天 120
かき揚げ 130
コロッケ
えび天 180
YOU'RE THANKING ME?
WHAT?
?

YOU DON'T NEED TO THANK ME.

OH.

?

UH... "O, R, D, E, R, I..."

"F-O,"

"R..."

じっ STARE

"N-G."

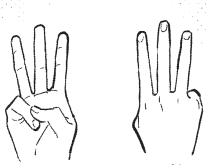
"THANK."

"YOU."

TAP TAP

...SURE MAKES IT A LOT EASIER TO COMMUNICATE.

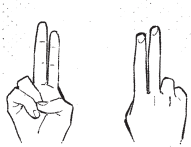
KNOWING HOW TO FINGER SPELL...



"WA" and "YU" are also opposites.

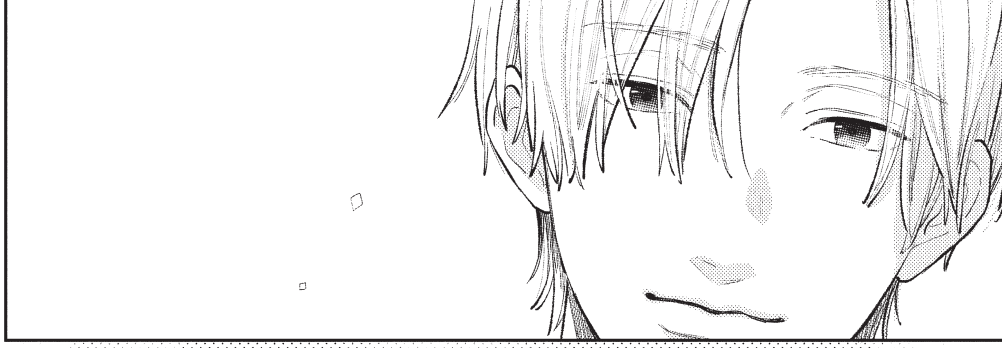
...since you have to take into consideration how the fingers look from your partner's point of view.

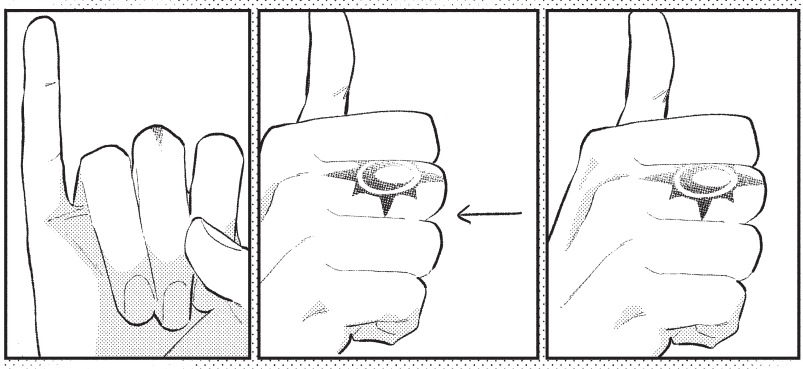
It's a little tricky...



"U" and "TO" are opposites of each other.

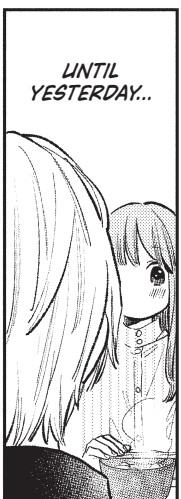

I'll just have to...
...get used to finger spelling.
HM?
FLAP FLAP
C-O...
M-E...
LET'S SEE.
E-L...
W.
M.
E.
...
H, O...



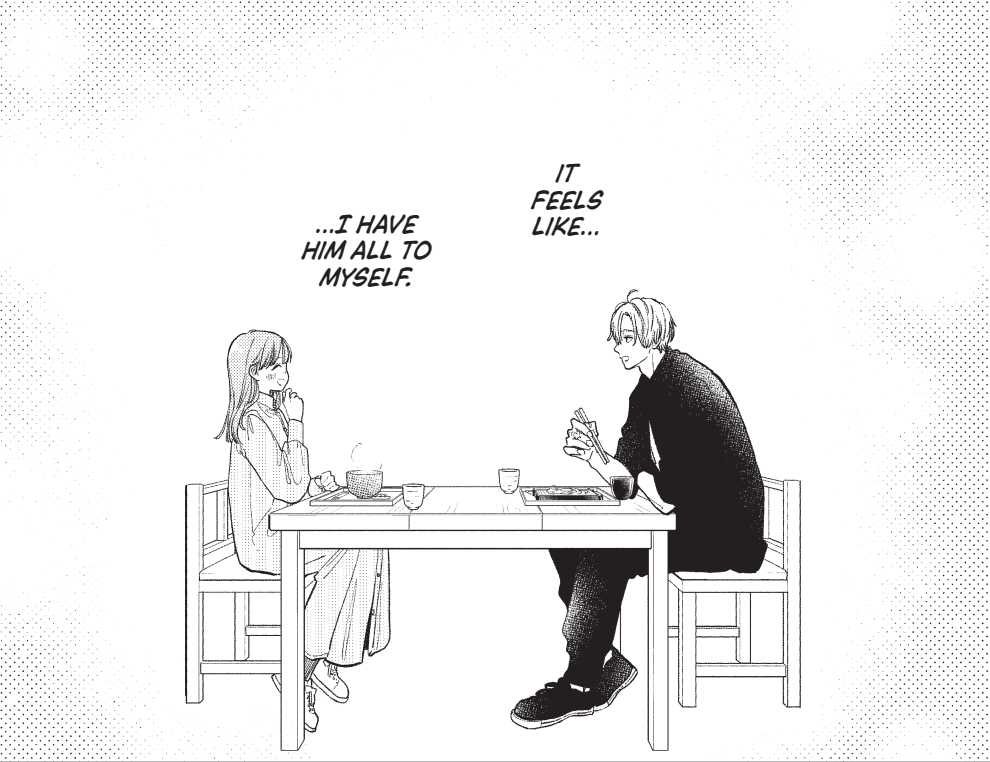





AND NOW HE'S EATING RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.
...THIS PERSON WAS TRAVELING AROUND THE WORLD.

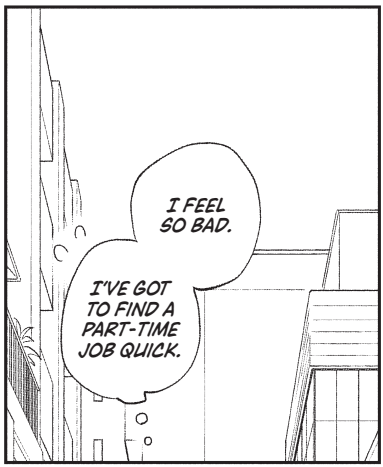

UNTIL YESTERDAY...



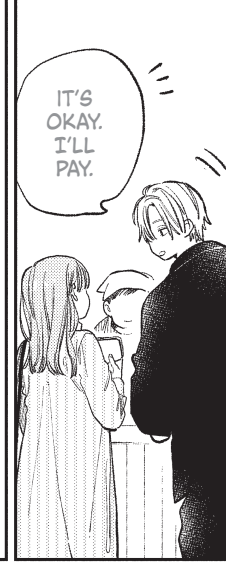

IT FEELS LIKE...
...I HAVE HIM ALL TO MYSELF.


Really?

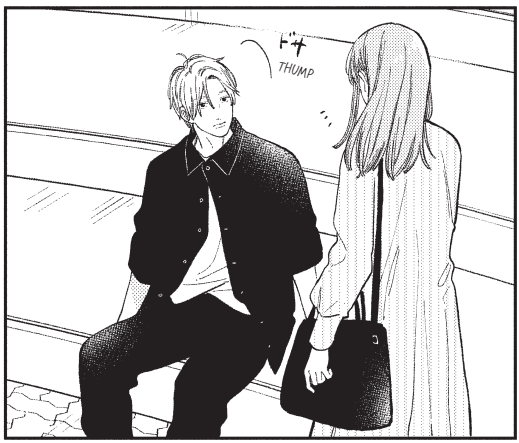

JAPANESE FOOD REALLY IS DELICIOUS.

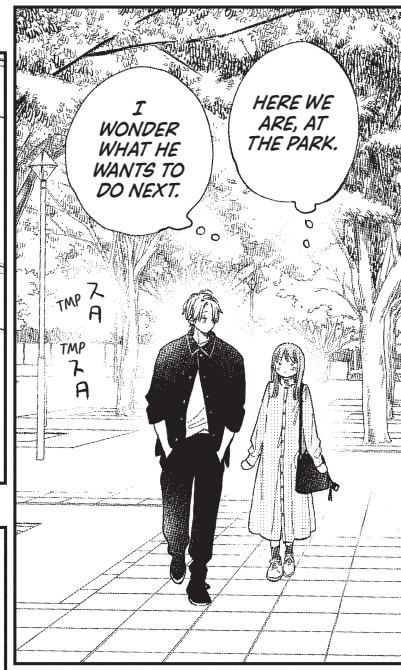

I FEEL SO BAD.
I'VE GOT TO FIND A PART-TIME JOB QUICK.

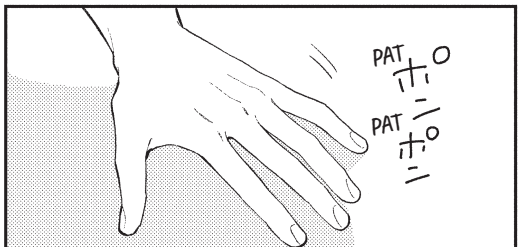

HUH?! ITSUOMI-SAN'S TREATING ME?!
IT'S FINE.
1000
1000

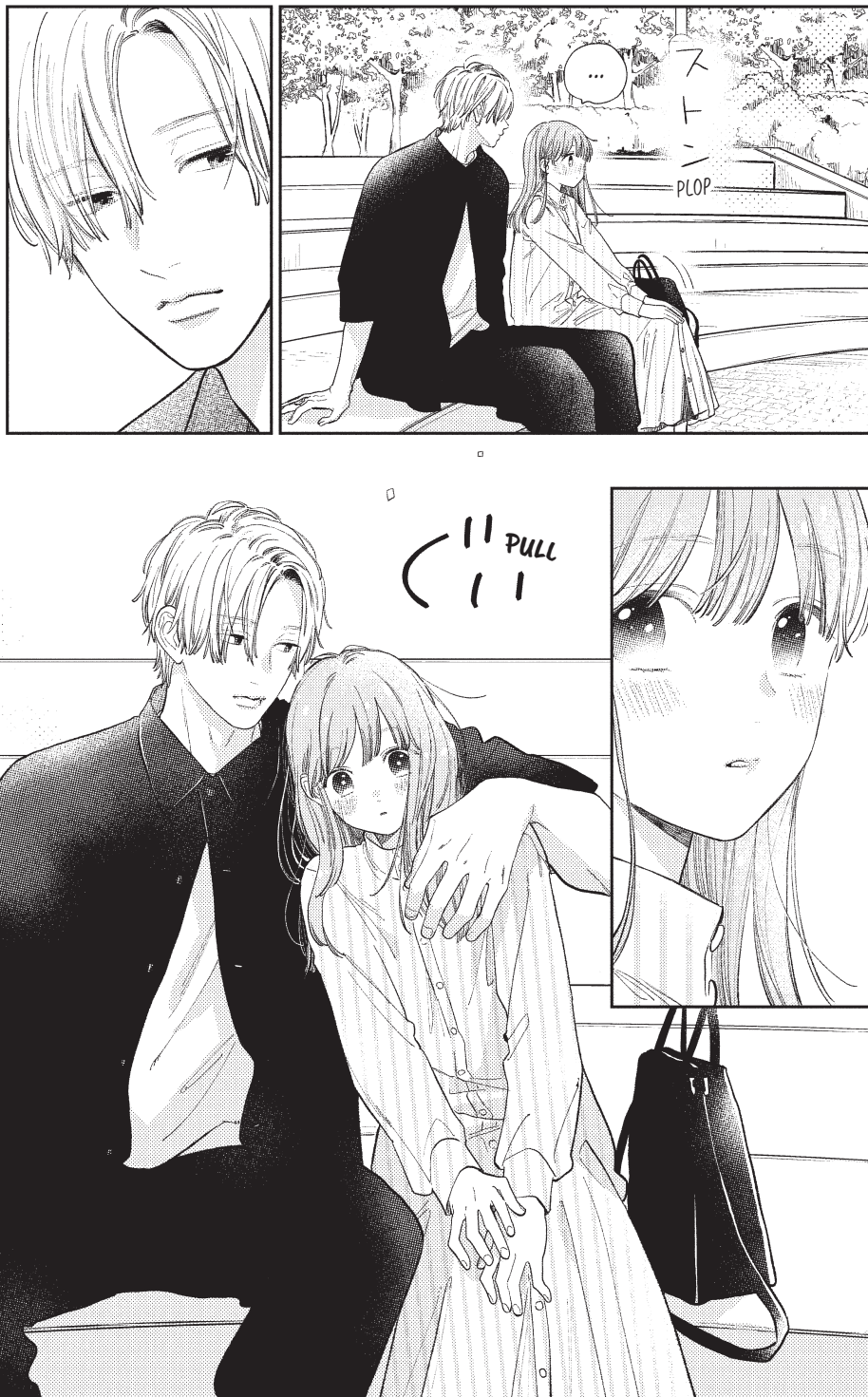

IT'S OKAY. I'LL PAY.




THUMP


I WONDER WHAT HE WANTS TO DO NEXT.
HERE WE ARE, AT THE PARK.
TMP
TMP

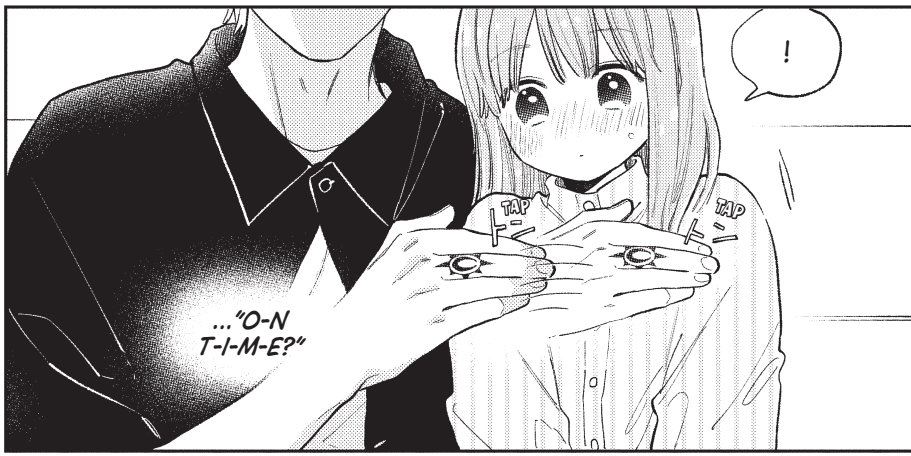

PAT
PAT

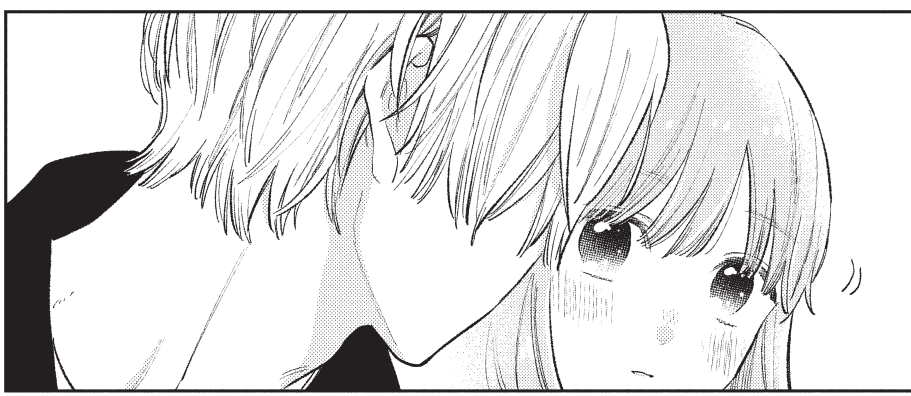

…
ストン
PLOP
PULL



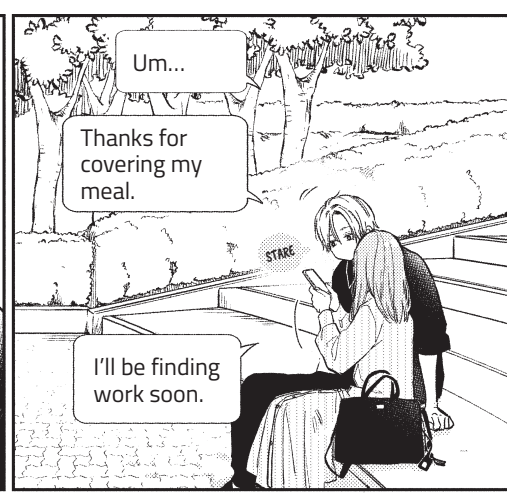

HE REALLY IS SPOILING ME.

"A-R-E."
"Y-O-U."
"O-K."


!
TAP
TAP
...“O-N T-I-M-E?”




THERE’S NO RUSH.
HEY.


Um...
Thanks for covering my meal.
STARE
I’ll be finding work soon.

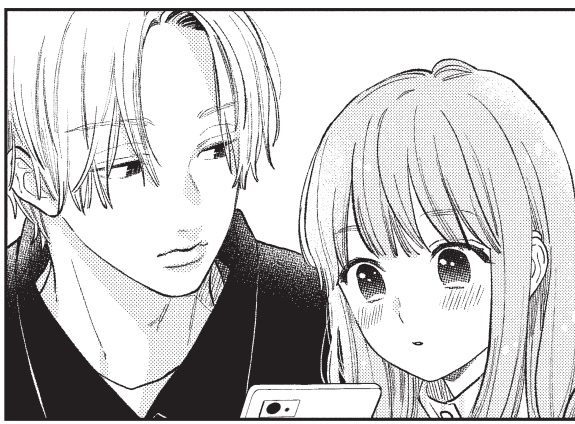

What is it?
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
I want to talk to you about something important


I have two best friends
One is Johannes in Germany
And the other is Shin
That drunk guy you saw before
OH!
THEY'RE BEST FRIENDS ...?
RIGHT, I REMEMBER SHIN-SAN...
I GOT HIS BUSINESS CARD.

I want to introduce you to Shin first

Would you be all right meeting him now?

Or no?



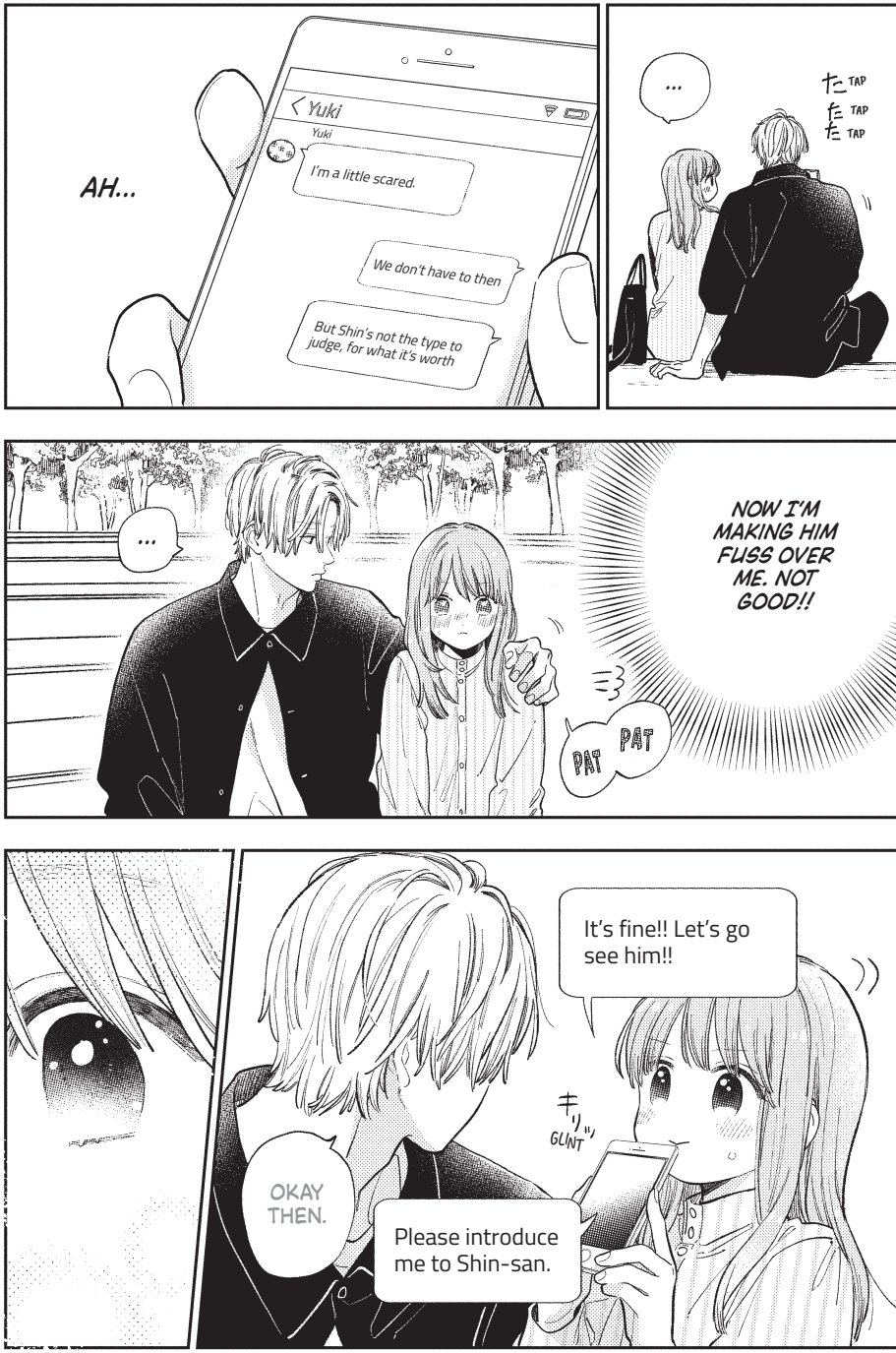
I'm okay with it.

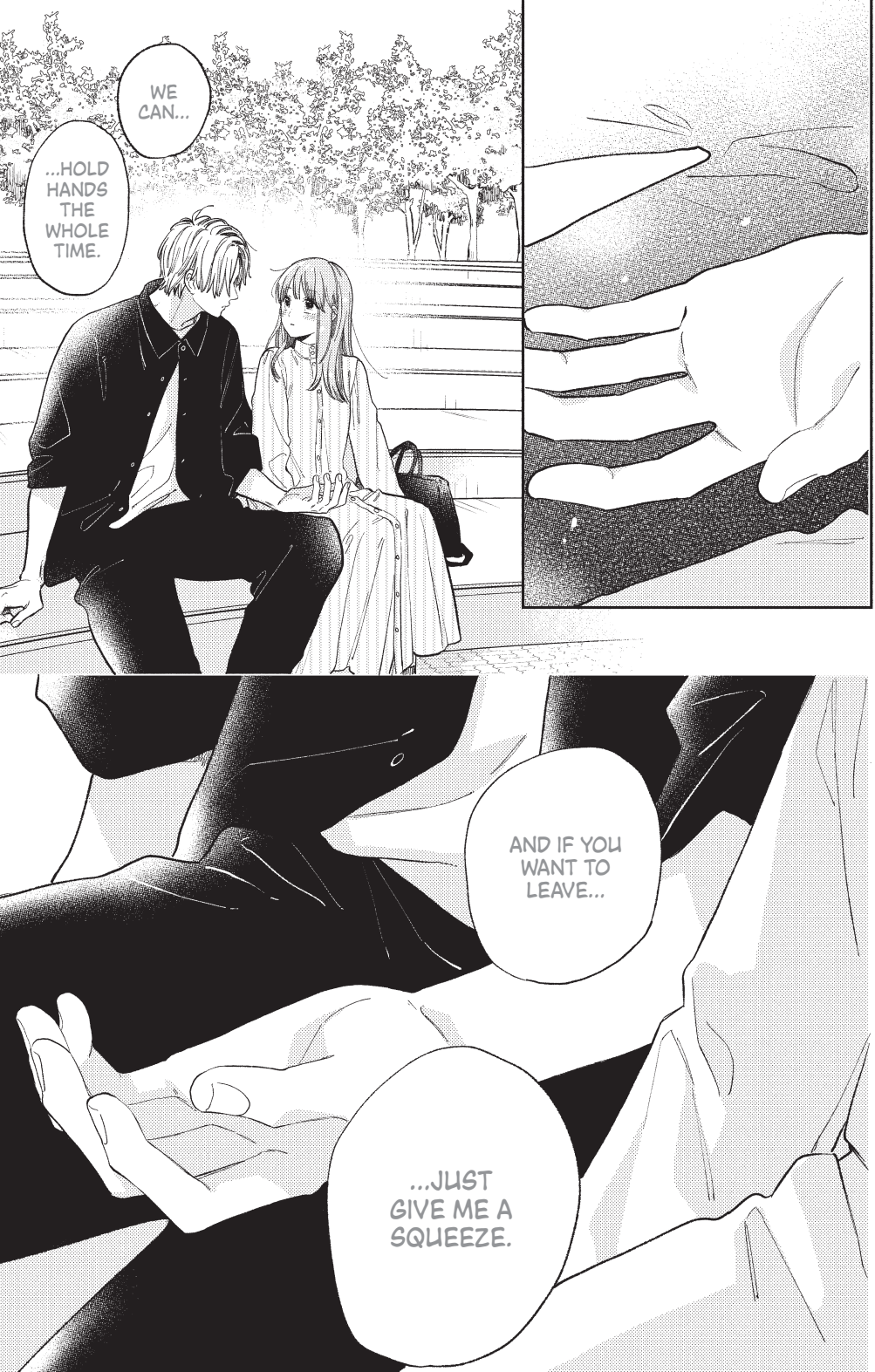
But...

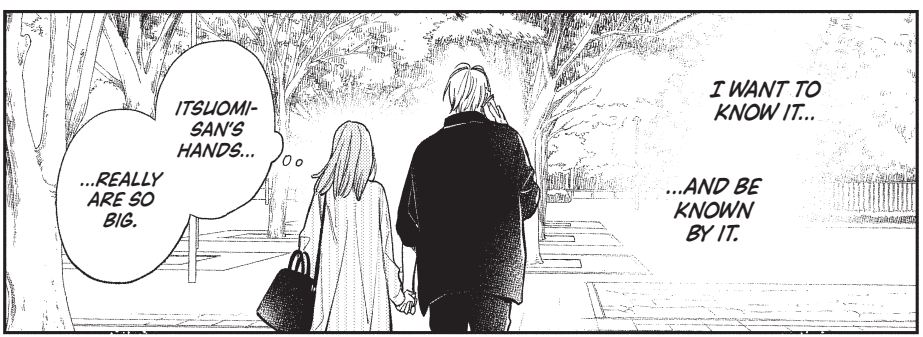
...

RIGHT NOW...?


BECAUSE ...
...OF YOUR HEARING?
I'm okay with it.
But...
I'm a little scared.
I'D FEEL BAD NODDING...
AFTER ALL, HE'S OFFERING TO INTRODUCE ME TO HIS BEST FRIEND.
I HOPE HE DOESN'T THINK I'M INSULTING SHIN-SAN...


AH...
Yuki
Yuki
I'm a little scared.
We don't have to then
But Shin's not the type to judge, for what it's worth
...
TAP
TAP
TAP
...
NOW I'M MAKING HIM FUSS OVER ME. NOT GOOD!!
PAT
PAT
It's fine!! Let's go see him!!
GLINT
OKAY THEN.
Please introduce me to Shin-san.


WE CAN...
...HOLD HANDS THE WHOLE TIME.
AND IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE...
...JUST GIVE ME A SQUEEZE.



IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BEGUN.

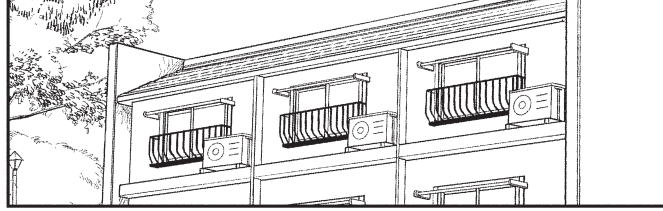
I WANT TO BE TAKEN...

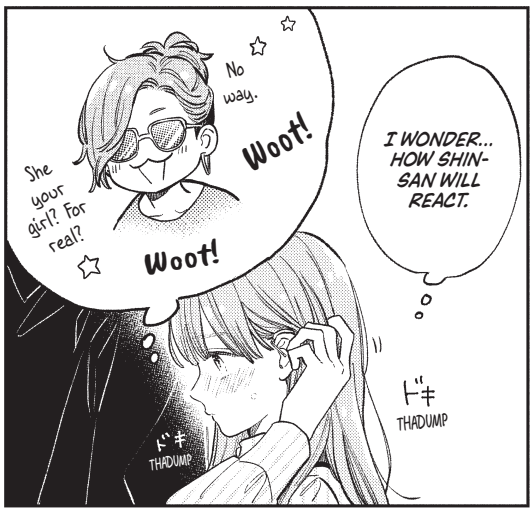
...INTO ITSUOMI-SAN'S WORLD.

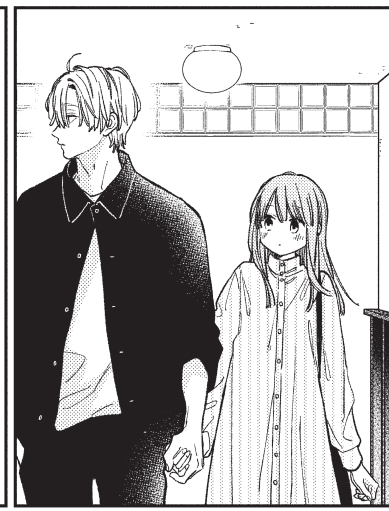
BUT...

...I DON'T WANT HIM TO REALIZE YET...

...HOW INCONVENIENT IT IS FOR ME TO HOLD HANDS.

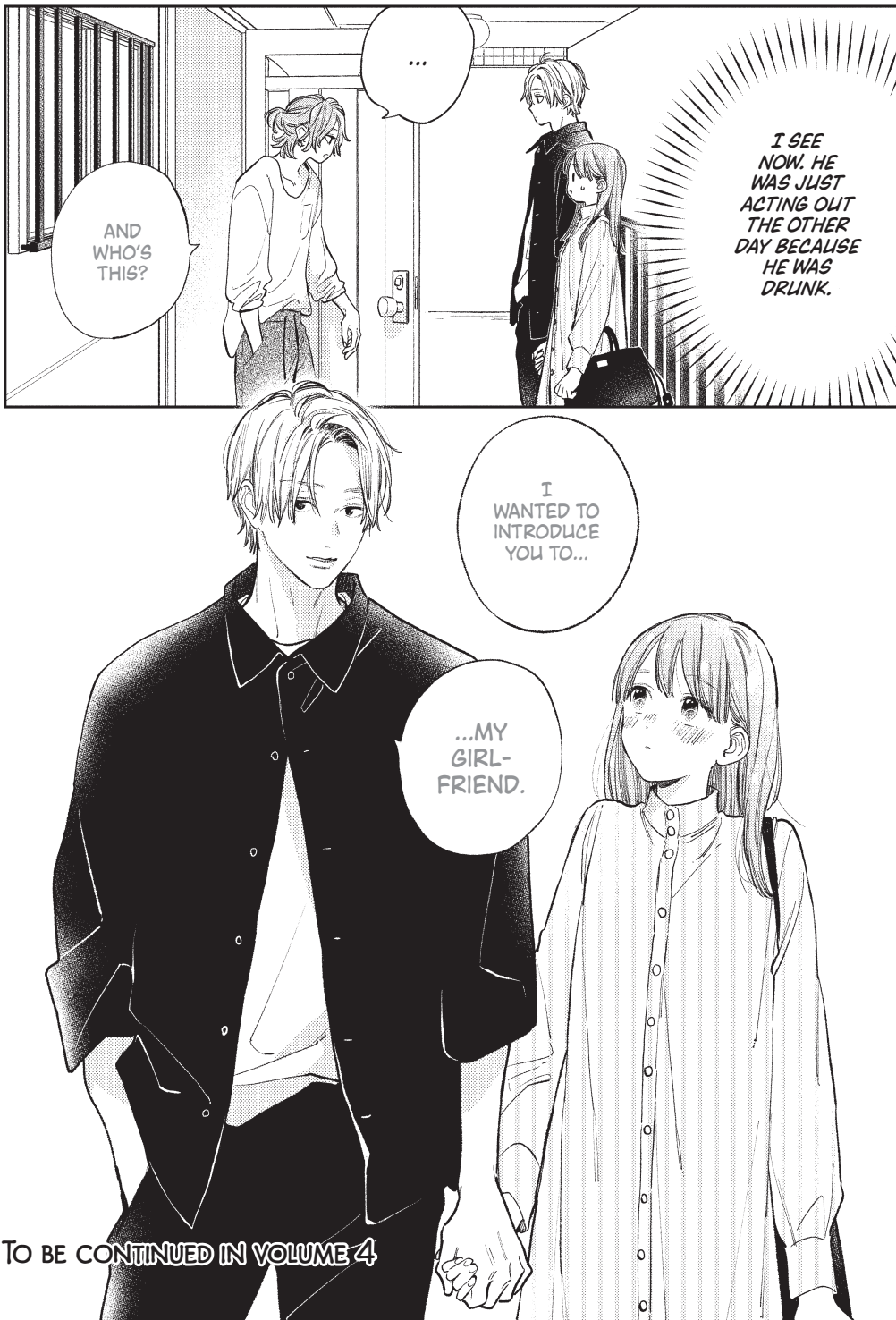



No way.
Woot!
She your girl? For real?
Woot!
I WONDER... HOW SHIN-SAN WILL REACT.
ドキ
THADUMP
ドキ
THADUMP




YO, SHIN.
YOU'RE EARLY.
?!!! WHAT THE?!


ガチャッ
KLATCH



TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 4

Afterword

Thank you very much for reading volume 3. I've been so happy to receive letters from readers telling me that they've started to learn sign language thanks to this story. Sign languages differ depending on the region, and signs go in and out of use depending on the times, so it's a constantly evolving language. In fact, even if you show sign language books to the Deaf, there will be signs that they don't use or even recognize. There may be instances of the sign language in this manga not matching what you're taught in sign language class, but I hope you will bear in mind that they're all legitimate forms of sign language. For the record, the sign that Itsuomi used with Yuki in this scene meant "go out with me."



(See chapter 10)

Well, I hope to see you again in volume 4.

suu Morishita

Special Thanks

- Editor: Shiigeru-san,
- Balcolony's Takeuchi-san, Ichiki-san
- Everyone at spica works
- The editorial staff of *Dessert*
- The international rights department
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- Backgrounds Materials Collaborator: Rockin' Robin, Osu-sama

Research Help:

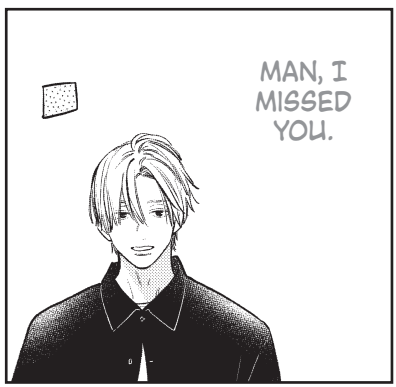
- Naomi Nishimiya-sama
- Sister Makiro

Staff

- Finishing Touches: Nao Hamaguchi-chan
- Backgrounds: Saya Aoi-san

All of our readers!

Translation Notes



"Man, I missed you," page 129
In Japanese, Yuki thinks Itsuomi is saying, "*Gyuushite ii?*" or, "Can I hug you?" In fact, as she later finds out, he's saying, "*Chuushite ii?*" or, "Can I kiss you?" This is why Yuki is holding her arms out for a hug on page 131. The two words are similar in Japanese, a language with lots of homophones due to its relatively small number of vowel sounds.

Shin and *kokoro*, page 147



There is an interesting detail on this page in the Japanese version that is impossible to depict in English. Japanese is written using three alphabets: *hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. The first two are syllabic, meaning each letter is associated with the sound of a spoken syllable, but kanji is logographic, meaning its letters only represent words, and most kanji have multiple pronunciations. The kanji for Shin, 心, is also the word for "heart," in which context it's pronounced "kokoro." At the bottom of this page, Yuki is confused because she sees this kanji in Itsuomi's text messages and misreads it as "kokoro," not realizing he's referring to his friend Shin.

Sign language, page 155
Japanese Sign Language, spoken Japanese, spoken English, and American Sign Language are all different languages, so the written transcriptions of signs in this book are translations of translations. If this series has inspired you to learn more about American Sign Language, you may want to check out The ASL App, at theaslapp.com, or the ASL Connect: ASL for Free page at gallaudet.edu/asl-connect/asl-for-free/.

THE SWEET SCENT OF LOVE IS IN THE AIR! FOR FANS OF OFFBEAT ROMANCES LIKE WOTAKOI



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COMICS

PERFECT WORLD

Rie Aruga



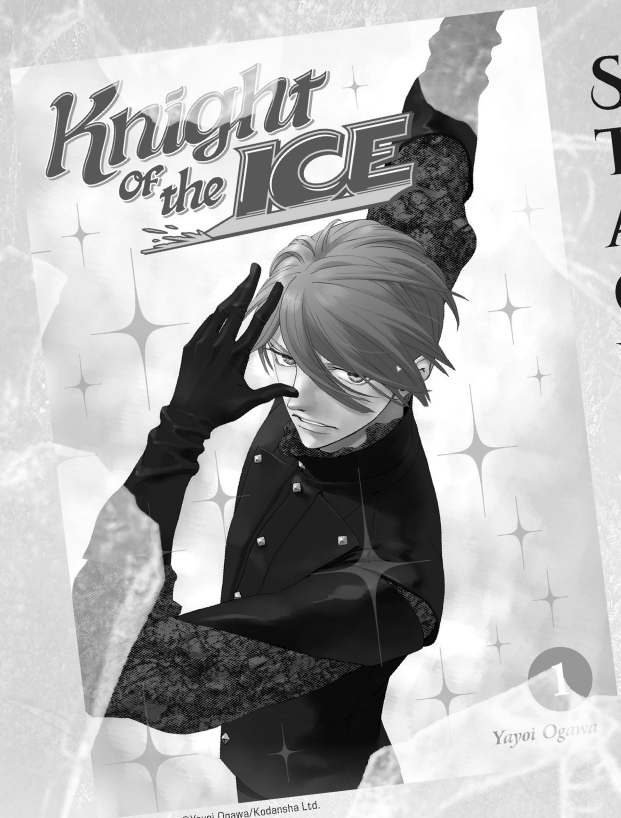
An office party reunites Tsugumi with her high school crush Itsuki. He's realized his dream of becoming an architect, but along the way, he experienced a spinal injury that put him in a wheelchair. Now Tsugumi's rekindled feelings will butt up against prejudices she never considered — and Itsuki will have to decide if he's ready to let someone into his heart...

"Depicts with great delicacy and courage the difficulties some with disabilities experience getting involved in romantic relationships... Rie Aruga refuses to romanticize, pushing her heroine to face the reality of disability. She invites her readers to the same tasks of empathy, knowledge and recognition."
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A Sign of Affection 3

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